THE DOSTOEVSKY MUSEUM

5/2 Kuznechny Lane, St. Petersburg, 191002
M "Vladimirskaya", M "Dostoevskaya"
Tel.: +7 (812) 571-4031, www.md.spb.ru

THE DOSTOEVSKY MUSEUM IN ST. PETERSBURG GUIDEBOOK

N. Ashimbaeva, V. Biron

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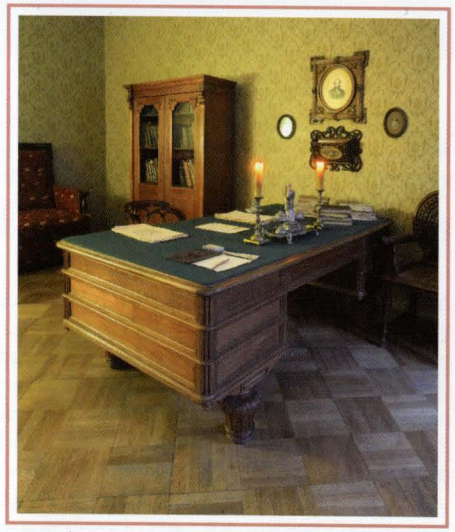

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The first version of this Guidebook to The F.M.Dostoevsky Literary-Memorial Museum in St.Petersburg was published in 1999. This new edition is significantly expanded and supplemented by many additional illustrations.

This Guidebook will greatly enhance your visit to the Museum, as well as your knowledge and understanding of Dostoevsky's life and oeuvre.

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THE HISTORY OF THE F.M. DOSTOEVSKY LITERARY-MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Among Dostoevsky's numerous Petersburg addresses, the building on the corner of Kuznechny Lane and Dostoevsky Street (formerly Yamskaya) holds particular significance. The writer moved there with his family in the beginning of October 1878 and was to reside there until the day of his death, January 28, 1881. It was in this house that many of Dostoevsky's contemporaries were to visit him, and his last novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, was written. This simple, completely ordinary Petersburg apartment building, devoid of distinctive architectural features, has today become one of the most popular attractions in the city precisely because it was there that Dostoevsky lived and died.

Even before the Russian Revolution, articles had appeared in the press about the need to commemorate the house where F. Dostoevsky had lived. In 1909 a historical plaque was mounted on its façade. The first Dostoevsky Museum was founded by his widow, Anna Grigorievna Dostoevskaya, and Historical Museum in Moscow provided space for her collections (in 1906). After the Revolution, in 1928, Dostoevsky Museum opened in Moscow on the site of the former Marinsky Hospital for the Poor (Bozhedomka Street), where the writer had spent his childhood years. Plans for a Dostoevsky Museum in Petersburg (then Leningrad) remained unrealized.

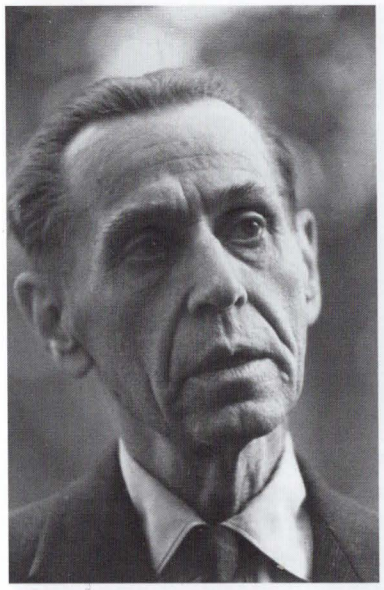
In 1911 the writer's widow, Anna Grigorievna Dostoevskaya, moved to Sestroretsk where she worked on her *Memoirs*. Before leaving Petersburg, she had put all the remaining objects from the Kuznechny Lane house in storage. She regularly visited her estate on the shores of the Black Sea, for several years. It is there that the Revolution of 1917 caught up with her.

Kuznechny Lane. Photograph. 1929

The following year, she died there, completely alone, far away from her children and grandchildren. The furniture and other objects from the storage were subsequently lost. With some few exceptions, however, almost all valuable manuscripts ended up in state archives.

During several decades after the writer's death, the house on Kuznechny Lane, more than once, underwent reconstructions that changed its appearance. In the Soviet years, it was used by the State for communal apartments.

Dostoevsky's memory was not much revered, in those years. Both the writer's tragic fictional world and his social and religious convictions



Andrey Fyodorovich Dostoevsky, writer's grandson

Maria Vladimirovna Savostianova, writer's grandniece

were incompatible with official Soviet ideology. It was hard to imagine the possibility of creating a museum in the house where he had lived. Even then, however, several writers and scholars (D.A.Granin, D.S.Likhachev, G.M.Friedlaender) wrote of Dostoevsky's significance in the history of Russian culture, and of the need to create a museum in the city where he had spent so many years of his life.

1971 was announced the Year of Dostoevsky by UNESCO. The 150th anniversary of the great writer's birth, an event commemorated throughout the world, catalyzed initiation for the construction of the present museum. The F.M. Dostoevsky Literary-Memorial Museum in Leningrad was scheduled to open in 1971, in time for the occasion. By that time, the whole building on the Kuznechny Lane was slated for major repairs, in any case. This created an opportunity for the founders of the Museum to rebuild the writer's apartment based on the plans of the house found in its Archives, and on the memoirs of the writer's contemporaries. His study was reconstructed according to a photograph taken by V. Taube after the writer's death. Next to the memorial apartment, a large literary exposition opened, dedicated to the life and work of Dostoevsky. It was designed by a well-known museum artist Tatiana Voronikhina (1939–1998). The architectural project of the Museum as a whole was implemented by Georgy Piontek (1928–2005).

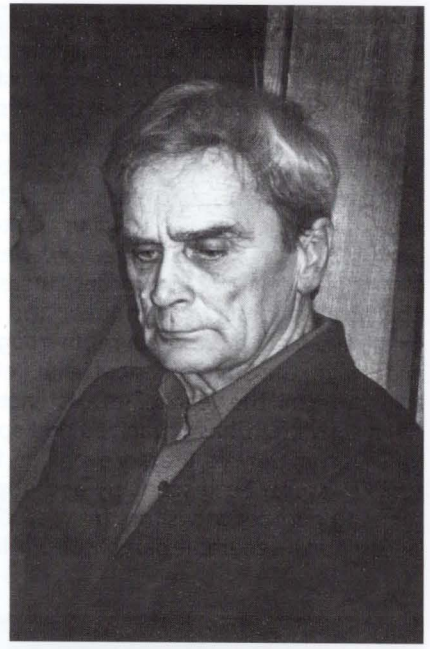
Memorial plaque, mounted on 5 Kuznechny Lane in 1956

The writer's grandson, Andrei Fyodorovich Dostoevsky (1908–1968), contributed significantly to the creation of the Museum. The valuable materials he had gathered in memory of his famous grandfather were to become the basis of the Museum's collection. Dostoevsky's grand-niece, Maria Savostianova (1894–1982), donated family heirlooms. The most valuable items of this collection are housed in the literary exposition, as well as in the apartment itself.

Much credit should also go to the Museum's first director, Boris Fedorenko (1913-2007). Creating the Museum started practically from the scratch. For the period of renovation of the historical building, the pioneers of research in the Museum, even before its physical creation, – N.Ashimbayeva, N.Perlina, and B.Ulanovskaya – were alotted the basement of the actual building. It is there that the first artifacts initially arrived and started gathering. It is also there that heated discussions of the future exhibit took place, and where solutions for the eventual design of the Museum and the writer's memorial flat were sought and debated.

The F.M. Dostoevsky Literary-Memorial Museum opened on November 13, 1971. That day became a major event in the cultural life of Leningrad-Petersburg. After all, to many people it was, first and foremost, a city associated with Dostoevsky. At that time, Russian intelligentsia regarded the creation of the Museum in Dostoevsky's last apartment as a just and long-awaited tribute to the memory of the great writer. At the Museum, one could both see and visit the apartment where Dostoevsky had lived, and get thoroughly acquainted with his life and creative work, as well as explore his worldview, especially as concerns what the human being is and what his/her role and place in the world is. By the beginning of the 1970s, there clearly arose a great spiritual and intellectual need and yearning for such knowledge in Russian Society. Its members were ready, willing,

and able to comprehend Dostoevsky by participating in free communication and unrestricted debates. As it promoted these debates and this kind of communication the Museum almost immediately became a cultural magnet for all the admirers of Dostoevsky's talent. Ever since, lovers of the writer's work from all over the world have continued to visit the house on Kuznechny Lane.



Boris Varfolomeevich Fedorenko, first Director of the F.M.Dostoevsky Museum

As for the cultural, poetic, and literary life of the City, the Museum also immediately became its key attraction. From its very inception, it initiated and fostered an organic connection between Dostoevsky and the live literature process in Leningrad, a process which in those years was often counter-cultural. Works of many talented poets who belonged to the so called "second/ alternative literary reality" elicited a reaction of suspicion from Soviet authorities, but they were first exposed to the public at, or by, the Museum, via various events and discussions it conducted or initiated. Significantly, in the early 1980s, it was primarily via the Dostoevsky Museum that Club 81 came into existence – an unofficial club which united underground writers and poets. A lot of underground poets, who subsequently became famous, read their works there. Among them were V. Krivulin, S. Stratanovsky, Y. Kublanovsky, B. Kenjeev, T. Bukovskaya, O. Okhapkin, P. Cheygin, and many others. The very concept of the literary "Underground" had something in common with Dostoevsky's "underground", conjuring up the world and image of his Underground Man. It was befitting that these readings also occurred in the basement where the work, planning, and research of the Museum's founders had originated. Because of these gatherings, the basement still remained a milestone of sorts in the history of the Museum.

Over the years, the Museum's collection has increased many times over. At the present time, it includes a large collection of graphic and applied art and a significant collection of photographs. The Museum Library holds about 24,000 volumes and a collection of theater posters and programs from various productions of Dostoevsky's works. In addition, there is also a small

collection of the writer's own papers, containing in part his correspondence with family and the literary manuscripts of his friends, including the poet A. Maikov. These collections are constantly growing, in large part thanks to the gifts of visitors, friends of the Museum, and Dostoevsky scholars.

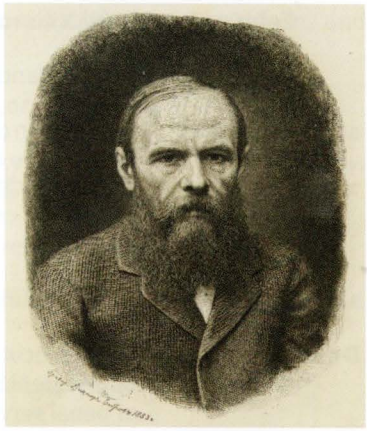
The heart of the Museum and the main reason why so many people from different countries of the world come to the house on the Kuznechny Lane, is the writer's Memorial apartment. It has been reconstructed according to the archival plans of the building and to the memoirs of A.G.Dostoevskaya and of the writer's other contemporaries who had visited him at his home.

Adjacent to the apartment, there is a Literary exhibit where a large amount of documents, books, and pictures helps visitors to explore Dostoevsky's life and oeuvre. In 2009, the Literary exhibit was awarded the Prize of the Government of Saint Petersburg.

During all the years of its existence, the Museum's creative activity has been thriving. It has organized and sponsored exhibits of modern artists, various conferences, literary evenings, theatre performances, all addressing various issues, both scholarly and popular. These events attract an ever growing number of visitors from all parts of the world. The Museum has become an inseparable part of cultural life in today's St. Petersburg.

B. Kostygov. *5 Kuznechny Lane*. 1996

F.M.Dostoevsky. Lithograph by V.Bobrov. 1883



FYODOR MIKHAILOVICH DOSTOEVSKY
Main dates in his life

1821, October 30	Birth of F.M.Dostoevsky in Moscow, to the family of Regimental doctor at the Marinsky Hospital for the Poor, Mikhail Andreevich Dostoevsky (1788–1839).
1833–1837	Years of studying at Moscow boarding schools.
1833, February 27	Death of his mother, Maria Fyodorovna Dostoevskaya.
May	The Dostoevsky brothers, Mikhail and Fyodor, move to Petersburg.
1838, January 16	Entering the Military Engineering Academy.
1839, June 8	Death of Dostoevsky's father.
1843, August 12	Graduation from the Military Engineering Academy.
1844, October	Resignation from the military service.
1845, May	Acquaintanceship with Nekrasov and Belinsky, both delighted with *Poor Folk*.
1846, January	Publication of *The Petersburg Collection*, which included Dostoevsky's novel *Poor Folk*.

February	Publication of the novella *The Double*.
May	Acquaintanceship with M.V.Petrashevsky.
1848, December	Publication of the novella *White Nights*.
1849, April	Public Reading of the *Letter to Gogol* by Belinsky, banned by censorship, at the Petrashevsky Circle gathering.
1849, April 23	Arrest and incarceration in the Peter and Paul Fortress.
December 22	Mock execution at the Semyonovsky Square. Subsequently, his Sentence pronounced: 4 years of penal servitude followed by lifelong service as a private soldier .
1850, January	Meeting with the wives of Decembrists, Natalia Fonvizina and Praskovia Annenkova.
1850–1853	Serving his penal term in the Omsk prison.
1854–1859	Military service in Semipalatinsk.
1857, February 6	Marriage to Maria Dmitrievna Isaeva (née Kostant) in Kuznetsk.
1859, December	Return to Petersburg.
1860, September	Publication of the Introduction and First chapter of *Notes from the House of the Dead*, in the weekly newspaper *Russian World* (finished in 1862).
1861–1863	Editing and Publishing *Time* (*Vremya*) journal.
1861	First publication of the novel *The Insulted and the Injured*.
1861, 1862	Trips to Europe.
1864–1865	Editing and Publishing *The Epoch (Epokha)* journal.
1864, March, June	Publication of *Notes from Underground*.
April 15	Death of his first wife Maria Dmitrievna.
July 10	Death of his elder brother Mikhail.

1866	Publication of the novels *Crime and Punishment* and *The Gambler*.
1867, February 15	Marriage to Anna Grigorievna Snitkina.
1867–1871	Sojourn of Dostoevskys in Western Europe (Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and, once more, Germany).
1868–1869, March	Publication of the novel *The Idiot*.
1868, February 22 – May 12	Birth, and death in infancy, of Dostoevsky's firstborn daughter Sofia.
1869 – 1870	Drafting the novel *The Life of a Great Sinner* (unrealized).
1870, February	Starting the novel *Demons*.
1871–1872	Publication of the novel *Demons*.
1873–1874	Editing *The Citizen (Grazhdanin)* journal\newspaper; publication of *The Diary of a Writer* (separate issues) in *The Citizen*.
1875	Publication of the novel *The Adolescent*.
1876–1877	Publishing the "mono-journal" *The Diary of a Writer*.
1878, May 15	Death of his three-year-old son Alyosha.
1878, June	Journey to the Optina Monastery (Optina Pustyn).
1879–1880	Publication of the novel *The Brothers Karamazov*.
1880, June 8	Delivering a *Speech on Pushkin* at the unveiling of the Pushkin Monument in Moscow.
1881, January	Work on the renewed issue of *The Diary of a Writer*.
January 28	Death of F.M.Dostoevsky.
February 1	Burial in Tikhvinsky Cemetery of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery.

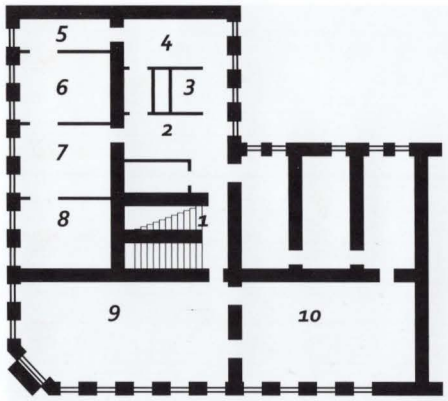
F.M.Dostoevsky. Photograph by A.O.Bauman. St.Petersburg. 1862 or 1863

Entry hall of the Dostoevskys' apartment

THE MEMORIAL APARTMENT

In the beginning of October 1878, the Dostoevsky family moved from Grechesky Avenue to a new apartment at 5 Kuznechny Lane (on the corner of Yamskaya Street, now Dostoevsky Street). Dostoevsky had once previously rented an apartment in this house for a very short time, in 1846. Thus it transpired that this address would be connected with both the beginning and the end of his creative life.

The family's decision to move here in 1878 was prompted by bereavement, a grave loss. In her memoirs Anna Dostoevsky, the writer's wife, wrote, "On May 16, 1878, an awful tragedy struck our family: our youngest son Lyosha passed away." The little boy had died of epilepsy, which he had inherited from his father. This circumstance deeply affected Dostoevsky, who, along with his wife, was tormented and distraught by the loss of their dearly loved youngest child. Soon afterwards, giving in to the suggestions of both Vladimir Solovyov and Anna, who wanted to distract the writer from his grief, Dostoevsky, joined by Solovyov, went to visit the Optina Monastery, a popular place of pilgrimage. There, he met the famous Elder Amvrosy. The image of the elder, as well as all of Dostoevsky's profound impressions from visiting the monastery, were afterwards reflected in his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*. Anna remembered: «When Fyodor Mikhailovich told the 'elder' about our tragedy and about my grief, which was manifested too wildly, the Elder asked him if I was a believer, [...] asked him to convey to me his blessing, and tell me what later the Elder Zosima would say to the grieving mother in the novel... It was evident from



Map of the Museum

1 *Staircase, entrance to the apartment*
2 *Entryway*
3 *Washroom*
4 *Nursery*
5 *Anna Grigorievna's room*
6 *Dining room*
7 *Sitting room*
8 *Dostoevsky's study*
9-10 *Literary exhibits*

Fyodor Mikailovich's stories what deep understanding and insight this much-respected "elder" possessed. When we returned to Petersburg in the fall [from the provincial town of Staraya Russa], we decided not to remain in an apartment that was full of reminders of our little boy, and so we moved to 5 Kuznechny Lane, where, 2 ½ years later, my husband was fated to die. Our second-floor apartment consisted of six rooms, an enormous storeroom for books, an entry hall, and a kitchen. Seven windows faced the Kuznechny Lane, and my husband's study was in the place where a marble plaque is now mounted."

Although not very detailed, Anna's memoirs became the first and most important source for the very difficult task of reconstructing Dostoevsky's Memorial apartment. It was evident from these memoirs that, even while the writer's widow was alive, changes had occurred in the house, and, in the following decades, practically nothing was left of the apartment where Dostoevsky had lived and died. The interior plan of the house was completely altered in the process of its division into communal apartments. Admirers of the writer's work could only stand in front of the house and imagine what it had been like during his life.

In November 1971, on the 150th anniversary of Dostoevsky's birth, the Literary-Memorial Museum opened, with the writer's last apartment completely restored. Now visitors are able to come up to the second floor, to the door with a plaque reading "Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky", ring the antique doorbell, and enter through the foyer of the apartment.

To the right of the entrance is the door to the former kitchen and to the left is the door to the storeroom for books which Anna recalls in her memoirs. Across from the front door is a small washroom which leads into the NURSERY where Liubov and Fyodor (the writer's children) lived. At the time when the family moved to Kuznechny Lane, Dostoevsky's daughter Liubov was nine years old, and his son Fyodor was seven. Only two

Entrance to the F.M. Dostoevsky memorial apartment

Doorplate

F.M. Dostoevsky's hat

of the Dostoevskys' four children had survived (their first child, Sofia, was born in Switzerland, but died a baby and was buried in Geneva). Dostoevsky was a very conscientious and loving father. If he had to be separated from his family (in the summer, when he remained in Petersburg on literary business, and his family went to the provincial town of Staraya Russa, or when he went for health treatment to Germany), Anna would receive letters which were full of love and concern for his children. He was especially attentive to their upbringing and education. He wanted them to become familiar with the best works of Russian and European writers which he had known and loved himself since early childhood and youth, e.g., Zhukovsky, Karamzin, Gogol, Pushkin of course, Dickens, Hoffman, Schiller, and Hugo. He often read aloud to Liuba and Fedya, and acquainted them with the Bible, from a volume of adaptations which he himself had at one time read: *One Hundred*

Fedya and Liuba Dostoevskys.
Photograph by N.A.Lorenkovich. Staraya Russa. 1878

Nursery

and Four Stories from the Old and New Testament. Dostoevsky wanted his children to acquire love for reading. In one of his letters of 1879 (from Bad Ems), he wrote to his wife about his son's pursuits: "You write that Fedya still goes out to play with the boys. He is just at that age when the crisis of transition from the first stage of childhood to conscious comprehension occurs. I have noticed quite a number of deep aspects in his character. [...] For a long time now he has needed to take up a book that would make him eventually come to love reading in an intellectual way. At his age I was already reading things. [...] If you only knew how much I'm thinking about it here and how much it bothers me."

This literary education, of course, had a great influence on Dostoevsky's children. His daughter Liubov (1869-1926) became a writer. She published several books, including *Sick Girls* (1911) and *The Woman Lawyer* (1913), although they are interesting primarily because they are the

Nursery. Stationery, books, toys

works of Dostoevsky's daughter. Beginning in 1913, when she lived abroad permanently, she wrote a memoir, *Dostoevsky According to his Daughter*, in French. It came out in German in 1920 in Munich, and in 1922, a Russian translation was published. She died in Northern Italy, and her grave is preserved in the city of Bolzano.

From childhood, Dostoevsky's son Fyodor (1871–1921) enjoyed sports and loved horses. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky wrote, probably thinking of his son, "...a Russian boy is simply born with a horse." In his adult life, Fyodor bred horses. Nonetheless, he exhibited certain literary proclivities, although he was rather critical of his own writing and never thought about having it published. He even composed some poetry, dedicated to a woman he loved, its manuscripts still available today. Fyodor F. Dostoevsky was buried in Moscow, in the Novodevichy Cemetery (his grave has not survived).

Adjacent to the nursery is DOSTOEVSKY'S WIFE'S ROOM (Anna Grigorievna Dostoevskaya, 1846–1918). Anna Snitkina became Dostoevsky's wife on February 15, 1867. Dostoevsky was twenty-five years her senior; he had had difficult experiences in life, and he also was suffering from epilepsy. The twenty-year-old Anna, however, had fallen in love with him, selflessly and forever. That happened in the days when they had worked together on his novel *The Gambler*. A.Miliukov, who had known Dostoevsky since the 1840s, wrote: "Dostoevsky's second marriage was completely happy, and in Anna Grigorievna he found a loving wife, a practical homemaker, and an intelligent judge of his talent. If Fyodor Mikhailovich, in his impracticality, managed to pay off more than 25,000 [rubles] of his own

Anna Grigorievna's room

Anna Dostoevsky's business notes. Inkstand. 19th cent

A.Dostoevsky's workbook. Wooden counting frame. 19th cent

and his brother's debts, it only could have been done by the organization and energy of his wife, who was able both to manage affairs with his creditors and to support her husband in difficult days."

It would seem that Anna was overburdened — caring for the children, her deep anguish caused by the deaths of two of her children, their firstborn, Sonia, and the three-year-old son Alyosha, her constant worry about Fyodor Mikahilovich's health and their difficult financial situation, especially in the first period of their life together—all this seemed to be an emotional overload, leaving no room for anything else in her life. Yet she also was Dostoevsky's full-time secretary and stenographer; she helped him in the writing process, and, in their last years together, she also managed to organize a book trade in which she distributed her husband's works by

subscription. The materials in Anna's files give some idea of her selfless labor.

Anna's close acquaintance, M.Stojunina, remembered that "she cared for him like a nanny, like the most concerned mother. Well, and it's true that they each adored the other."

To Dostoevsky, Anna was not only a faithful and devoted wife, friend, and helper, but also a woman whom he passionately loved. His feelings for her transpire in almost every letter to his wife, throughout all the years of their life together. After Dostoevsky's death, Anna devoted the rest of her life — all the remaining thirty-seven years! – to collecting materials on her husband's biography and to publishing his works. In the last years of her life, Anna wrote her own *Memoirs*, which brought her great literary fame.

Anna's room leads into the DINING ROOM. This room's furnishings recreate a typical scene from an old Petersburg apartment of the intelligentsia in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Dostoevsky family lived very modestly, with no tendencies toward luxury. This is noted by various memoirists, including M.Stojunina and I.Shcheglov (I.Leontiev).

The dining room contains a collection of items given to the Museum by some of Dostoevsky's descendants – the writer's grandson, Andrei Dostoevsky, and his grand-niece, Maria Savostianova. From the latter's collection the Museum obtained a set of antique china and two 17th century paintings by an unknown Italian artist of the Bassano school (the painting *The Last Supper* hangs in the dining room). The china cupboard contains a silver spoon and a little bell which belonged to Dostoevsky.

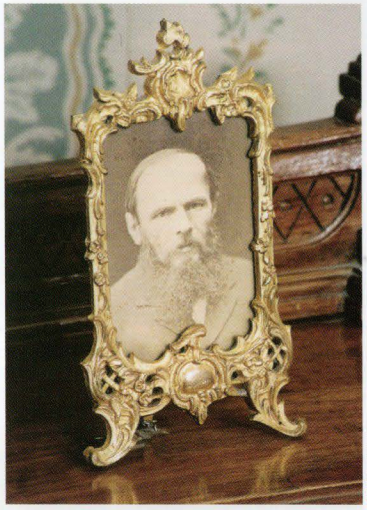
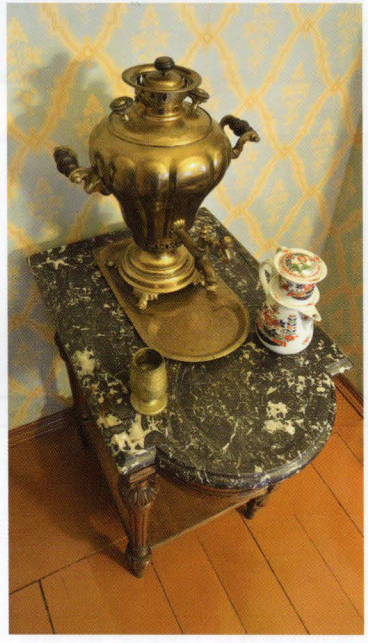


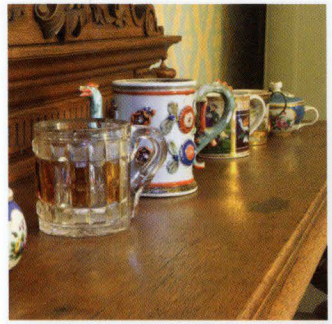
Photo portrait
of F.M. Dostoevsky (1880)
in bronze gilded frame



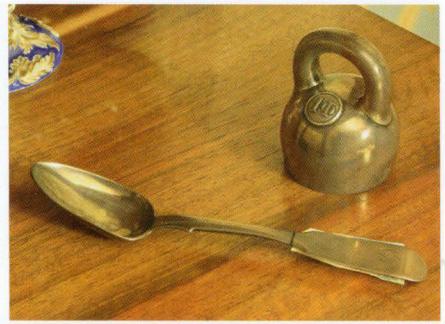
Samovar table

Dining room

The whole family used to gather at the table for meals – occasions for family socializing which Dostoevsky dearly loved. Anna recalls that her husband liked to buy things for dinner on his way home, and that he spoiled the children with treats. Drinking tea was very important. Good tea helped Dostoevsky keep up his strength during his nighttime work — he would work when the whole house was asleep. A hot samovar was always left for him in the dining room. Dostoevsky's tea-making process is described in detail in Anna's journal: "He would brew up the tea: first he rinsed out the teapot with hot water and added three teaspoons of tea (and without fail he had to have 'his' teaspoon — it was even named 'papa's teaspoon'). He would only fill the teapot 1/3 full, and then cover it with a napkin. Then after about three minutes he filled the rest of the teapot and covered it again. He would only pour the tea when it was fully steeped. He would put the teapot on the samovar only when the samovar had stopped boiling. When he poured the tea, papa would always look at its color [...]; it often happened that he would take his glass into his study and then return in order to add more or dilute it. He would say, 'You pour the tea, and it looks like a good color, but when you bring it into the study the color's not right.' He took two cubes of sugar."



Tea set from the collection of M.V.Savostyanova



Silver spoon with the initial monogram "F.D.", and silver bell shaped like a small one-pound weight – items from Dostoevskys' family

In fact, the characters of Dostoevsky's novels often attribute great importance to drinking tea. We need only recall Makar Devushkin from *Poor Folk* or Kirillov from *Demons*. In the former instance, "drinking tea" is a way for the protagonist to affirm himself, to be no worse than others. And for Kirillov, tea is the invariable companion of his night watches and philosophical meditations.

The Dostoevskys often had visitors, both relatives and friends, whom they would receive in the dining room and in the SITTING ROOM. The corner of the sitting room with the couch and oval table has been reconstructed on the basis of a drawing by Dostoevsky's niece,

Sitting room

Tobacco box (the "Laferme" brand) belonging to Dostoevsky. On the bottom of the box is an inscription penciled by the writer's daughter, Liubov, on the day of Father's death: "January 28, 1881. Papa died at quarter to nine"

Part of the sitting room's interior

Varvara Savostianova. Above the couch is another painting from Maria Savostianova's collection, *The Chalice Prayer* (a depiction of Mark 14:36 "take this cup away from me").

Dostoevsky would converse with his visitors in the sitting room at a similar table. Many of his friends frequented his apartment, including the poet A. Maikov; the critic and philosopher N. Strakhov; the famous women's movement activist A. Filosofova; and E. Stackenschneider, the architect Stackenschneider's daughter, herself an author of interesting memoirs. Famous activists of the time would gather in E. Stackenschneider's salon, which Dostoevsky would often frequent. The philosopher Vladimir Solovyov was also a frequent visitor of Dostoevsky's, as was his brother, the wellknown writer Vsevolod Solovyov. Several of his contemporaries left memoirs briefly mentioning Dostoevsky's last apartment. These were used in the reconstruction by the Museum.

Next to the sitting room, there is Dostoevsky's STUDY, which also served as his bedroom. This is the most authentic room, since it was reconstructed according to a photograph by V. Taube made in 1881, soon after the writer's death. The windows of the study face the Kuznechny Lane, also giving some view of the Vladimir's Icon Church, where Dostoevsky worshipped in the last years of his life.

Desk in the writer's study

The furnishings in the study were extremely simple. In the middle of the room, there was a writing desk, where papers and indispensable books lay in strict order.

In this small and modestly furnished room, Dostoevsky wrote his last novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, his most perfect work of genius. A separate edition of the novel came out just before the writer's death.

Photo portrait
of Anna Grigirievna Dostoevskaya.
1878

In the F.M. Dostoevsky's study

Personal items. Leather wallet, a stylo, a prescription written for Dostoevsky on the day of his death, and a box of medicine bought with this prescription. A note from his daughter

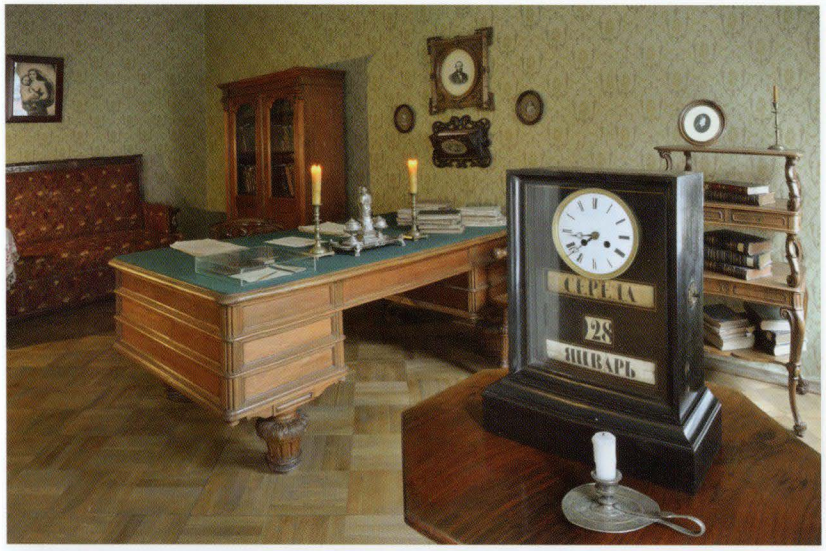
Galley proofs for *The Diary of a Writer* for 1881 lie on the table. This installment of *The Diary* was the last that Dostoevsky worked on, and it was published posthumously.

In the last years of his life Dostoevsky achieved a unique kind of fame among his readers, many of whom not only valued his enormous literary talent, but also saw in him a teacher and a person able to solve tormenting spiritual problems. Many people, often not acquainted with Dostoevsky personally, turned to him with confessional letters and received profound replies that were just as sincere. This correspondence took up a large part of the writer's time in the Kuznechny Lane apartment.

Several of the writer's personal effects are gathered in the study: a feather pen, a little medicine box (on the desk), a letterbox (above the desk), and the icon "Divine Mother, Joy of All the Sorrowful" in a silver setting. The icon was a gift to Dostoevsky from admirers of his work.

In the back of the study, there is a couch, above which a reproduction of a portion of Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* hangs. Dostoevsky used to stand in front of this picture for long periods of time in the Dresden Picture Gallery. After that, he always wanted to have a good reproduction of it. In 1879, he received one as a birthday present from S.Tolstaia, widow of the poet Aleksei Tolstoy. Anna had it framed.

The old book cabinets contain titles that were part of Dostoevsky's personal library. The Museum collects these books based on lists compiled by Anna. On the little table next to the windows, there is a clock which was stopped on the day and hour of Dostoevsky's death.



Clock belonging to the Dostoevsky family. Its hands are stopped at the time of his death – 8:36 p.m. on Wednesday, January 28, 1881

Dostoevsky died of an ailment of the lungs from which he had long suffered. On January 26, at around 4:00 p.m., he experienced a severe lung hemorrhage. Anna called the house doctor, J. von Bretsel. In his presence, an even bigger hemorrhage occurred. Medical consultants were called – Dr. A. Pfeifer and Professor D. Koshlakov. They pronounced the situation extremely critical. In the evening, the priest of the Vladimir Mother of God Church was summoned, and Dostoevsky gave his confession and received communion. On January 27, however, some hope for his recovery appeared. O. Miller, E. Stackenschneider, and others visited Dostoevsky, and in the evening his sister Vera and stepson Pavel Isaev came to see him. That day the writer also received letters and telegrams from various people anxiously inquiring about the course of his dangerous illness. On the morning of January 28, Dostoevsky said to his wife: "I've been awake for three hours, I just keep thinking, and only now have I clearly realized that I will die today." He asked her to open the Gospels "at random" – the very same copy which the Decembrists' wives had given him in Tobolsk, in transit to labor camp. He then asked her to read whatever passage she would open to: "John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?' But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:14-15). "Do you hear? "Let it be so now," that means that I'm going to die,' my husband said, and closed the book." The last day of the writer's life had arrived. On January 28, 1881, at 8:36 p.m., Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky passed away.

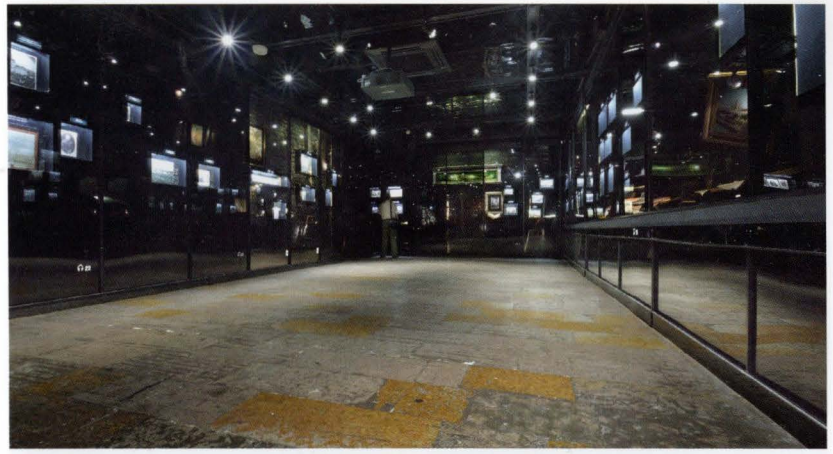
The icon of "The Theotokos, Joy of all the Sorrowful" belonging to F.M. Dostoevsky (views with and without its silver cover)

The news of Dostoevsky's death greatly shocked the Russian public. On January 29-30, the small apartment on Kuznechny Lane was full of people, who came in an unending stream to say goodbye to the beloved writer. An open coffin stood in the study, and the artist I. Kramskoy drew Dostoevsky on his deathbed. When Nekrasov was buried in 1878, Dostoevsky had expressed to Anna his wish that his remains be buried in the cemetery at the Novodevichy Monastery in Moscow. At his actual death, however, the Alexander Nevsky Monastery in Petersburg offered to donate a plot in its cemetery.

On January 31, Dostoevsky's body was carried from the Kuznechny Lane apartment. The funeral procession, which made its way to the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, was an event of an unprecedented scope. All of Petersburg accompanied the writer on his final journey – to the monastery's Church of the Holy Spirit, where the service was to take place. The church could not contain even a small part of all those who wished to attend. There was an especially large number of young people and university students, and some stayed in the church all night long.

On February 1, 1881, after the service, and in the presence of an enormous flow of people, Dostoevsky was buried in the Tikhvinsky Cemetery of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, next to Zhukovsky's grave. In 1883, a monument by the architect K. Vasiliev and sculptor N. Lavretsky was unveiled at the graveside ceremony.

Bust of F.M. Dostoevsky on his grave. Tikhvin Cemetery
at the Alexander Nevsky Monastery (now Masters of Arts Necropolis).
Sculptor N.A.Lavretsky. 1883



LITERARY EXHIBIT

The Literary Exhibit on the second floor of the Museum features the story of Dostoevsky's life and oeuvre. While the Memorial Apartment has been preserving its appearance since the moment of the Museum's opening, the Literary Exhibit has been changed more than once within the years of the Museum's existence. These changes ensued from several factors – the advance of Museum Studies, the forthcoming of new technologies, and, finally, due to changes, throughout history, in the ways public experiences the arts. Exposition styles become outdated, or fall into decay; over the years, they may cease to satisfy new expectations or answer or address new cultural challenges. All these challenges of the changing times have periodically prompted the Museum to seek new solutions. Nowadays, it is the third Literary Exhibit functioning at the Museum. Opened in 2009, it combines museum items and images with multimedia presentations, to broaden the visitors' experience of the writer's biography and literary work.

The current exhibit uses museum and exposition technologies available today, to fuse the stylistics of Dostoevsky's era with today's design and information capabilities, to enhance the effect of the experience on today's museum audiences. The author of the exhibit's concept is Vera Biron, and the artists are Tino Svetozarov and Igor Knyazev. The resulting experience is analogous to theatrical, with space becoming symbolic. The designers have aimed at a particular effect: the black "bifurcated" space, with infinite reflections within it, with its gleaming light, its blank walls with

Literary exhibit

"windows-as-objects exhibits," and its only actual, open window with a view onto the Church of the Vladimir Mother of God Icon – this whole experience conjures up the internal Cosmos of Dostoevsky and the ambience of his Petersburg works.

The exhibits comprise materials pertaining to writer's life and work: photographs, portraits of Dostoevsky and his milieu, the documents of the epoch, letters, manuscripts, etc. Additional information is presented on the screens that are also included in the art space of the exhibit. A great amount of information is stored in special touch-screens where one can find more detailed responses on topics of special interest. The halls of the Museum are also equipped with facilities for showing movies, including film premières.

M.A. Dostoevsky, writer's father.
Photocopy of the pastel by Popov. 1823

M.F. Dostoevskaya, writer's mother.
Photocopy of the pastel by Popov. 1823

Writer's father, Mikhail Andreevich Dostoevsky (1799–1839) was born in Podolia Governorate in a priest's family. He studied at Medical and Surgical Academy, took part in the War of 1812. After the War he was transferred to the Military Hospital in Moscow as a resident, and in 1821 – to Mariinsky Hospital for the Poor as a staff doctor, where he was serving for 18 years. Fyodor Dostoevsky was 18 when his father died, under mysterious circumstances in a small estate Darovoye. Some people believed that Mikhail Dostoevsky was murdered by his own serfs; another story was that Mikhail died of natural causes.

Maria Fyodorovna Dostoevskaya (1800–1837), née Nechaeva, came from a merchant family.

In 2009, the Literary Exhibit was awarded the prize of the Government of Saint-Petersburg.

Fyodor Dostoevsky was born in Moscow on October 30 / November 11, 1821 (until 1917 Russia followed the Julian Calendar, which, in the 19th century, lagged behind the Western Calendar by twelve days). His father, Mikhail Dostoevsky, was a doctor at the Mariinsky Hospital for the Poor in Moscow. By the time he was fifteen, Fyodor Dostoevsky's interests had already become clear: he knew that his future was literature. The early death of his mother turned everything upside down. His father, left with seven children on his hands, decided to send his eldest sons, Mikhail and Fyodor, to the vocational Military Engineering Academy in Petersburg, "*in order to guarantee their future*." The young Dostoevsky had absolutely no desire for a military future, so for the rest of his life, he would feel that his father had erred by forcing him into a military career. This first turning point abruptly ended a relatively peaceful and calm period in Dostoevsky's life. What lay

Annex of the Marinsky Hospital in Moscow, where F.M. Dostoevsky was born. Photograph. 1890's

Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky was born in Moscow in the family of the staff doctor of the Mariinsky Hospital for the Poor, Mikhail Dostoevsky, who lived in an apartment annex of the Hospital, in the Bozhedomka Street. The apartment consisted of an entryway, two rooms, and a kitchen. With the aid of a wooden partition, a space for the children's room was sectioned off the entry hall. The sitting room was also sectioned off with a partition to form an area for parents' bedroom. In the big kitchen, there was an enormous Russian stove. A storage room was in the stoop. After the birth of the younger children, the apartment was a bit enlarged.

In that apartment, Dostoevsky had lived for 15 years.

The Dostoevsky Museum was opened in the building in 1928 (modern address 23 Dostoevsky Street).

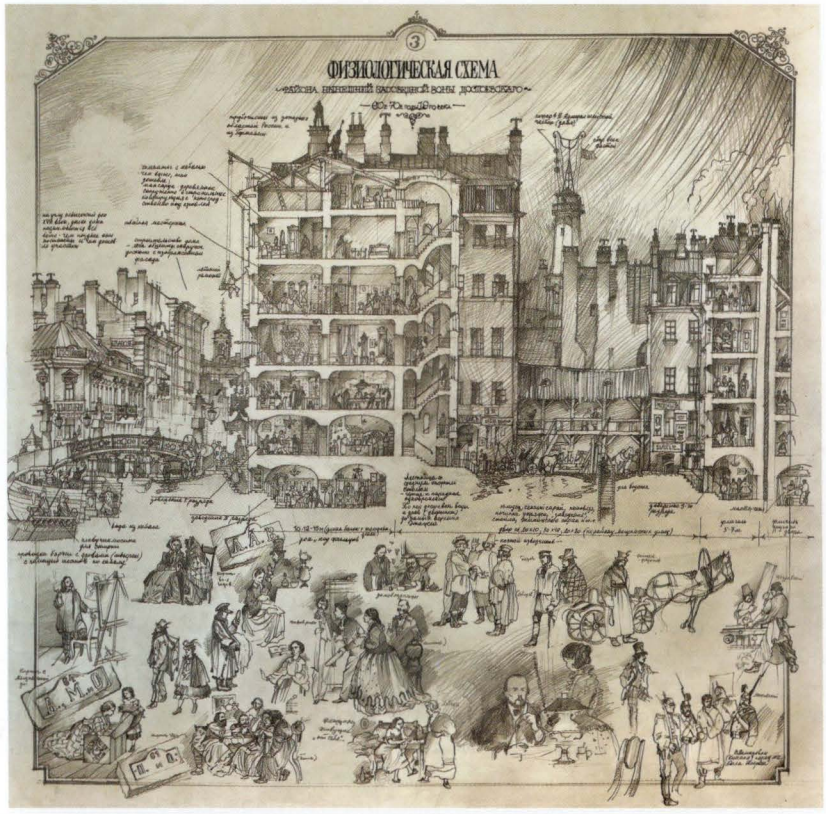
ahead was a new city, an unwanted course of study, and a life of wandering, while his whole previous life – his childhood in Moscow, his parents, brothers, sisters, the house where he grew up – had to be left behind.

Starting in May 1837, Dostoevsky's destiny was forever connected to Petersburg, a city which seemed to the future writer to be "most intentional and abstract..." Later, he would express his own relationship with the city through the mouths of his characters: "...it is a particular misfortune to live in Petersburg..."; "this is a city of half-crazed people... Rarely does one find a place with so many gloomy, intense, and strange influences on the human soul as in Petersburg." Nevertheless, Dostoevsky came to love Petersburg. It was the city of his young adulthood, of his birth as a writer, of dizzying successes, and tragic experiences and losses. Petersburg was necessary to him for his work, and it often served as the source of his inspiration.

B. Kostygov. *View of the Neva River.* From the series *Dostoevsky's Petersburg*. 1991

All in all, Dostoevsky lived in Petersburg for twenty eight years. He did not have his own apartment; he always rented. During his life in Petersburg, he changed his address 20 times, and never lived in any one house for more than three years. His apartments were usually located at intersections, and he made his characters populate similar spaces – the same kinds of buildings as he did. These were typical Petersburg rental houses, in which all available space, even basements and attics, was divided up and rented out. In his writings set in Petersburg, Dostoevsky presented a social cross-section of the residents of such houses, showing the city's unique 'physiology' – its demographic makeup. In his prose fiction, comprising just over thirty titles, twenty of them feature Petersburg as an inseparable part of his characters' existence. It was only in this particular mysterious city, with its own split personality, that the events in his novels could occur, fantastic even in their very ordinariness; insane ideas could be born here as native to, and natural for, the place, and crimes could be committed, also of the sort uniquely characteristic for the city: "All of this is so vulgar and ordinary that it almost borders on the fantastic." In depicting the interaction between the individual and the city, Dostoevsky described everything in most minute detail, brilliantly intertwining fiction and reality. Lulling the reader with apparent realism – a seemingly exact and faithful topography, he freely "moved" houses, changed owners, displaced streets, and added floors. He thus succeeded in creating a complex image of the city as a character in its own right; it did not merely serve as background scenery for the unfolding action, but became an active participant capable of influencing the course of events. The writer's vision of a fantastic city, ghost-like city, a phantom, became the subject of best illustrations for his novels.

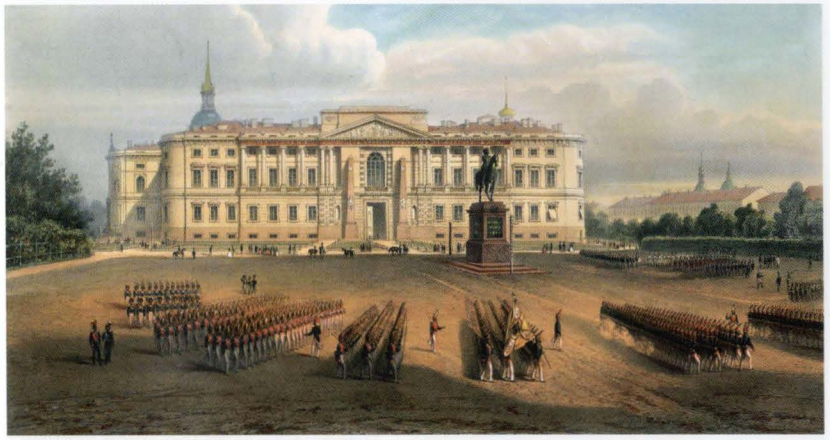
Dostoevsky had a tendency to perceive space with acute sensitivity. In his works, wide, open spaces or tight, enclosed spaces are presented as images with great significance. In novel after novel, closet-rooms, "coffins" and "cabins" cramp and oppress the characters, with their low ceilings and small windows, broken furniture, and peeling wallpaper. Dostoevsky does not surround his characters with meaningless things. In his poetic world, there are no accidental objects. He makes use of a relatively constant set of



B. Kostygov. *Cross-section of a Rental House.* From the series *The Physiology of Petersburg*, 1860's – 1870's, based on the works by Dostoevsky. 1991

everyday details, which all have a distinct meaning. Images in his poetic space almost always convey restriction. In his interiors, this can be a corner, a threshold, a wall, while outside, it can be a fence or a lane. All of these imagery elements become symbols and signs of a person's life and spiritual condition. Dostoevsky's protagonists are isolated in this world. His dreamers and "underground" men of split consciousness always live "in corners," distancing themselves from life on the outside. While writing his novels, Dostoevsky himself would retreat from people, "would retire into himself," and it is no accident that he usually worked at night, when he was completely alone and no one could disturb him.

Dostoevsky's own first "corner" in Petersburg was located in the Mikhailovsky Castle, one of the most gloomy and mysterious palaces in the city. In 1819, the building had been given to the Engineering Board, and the



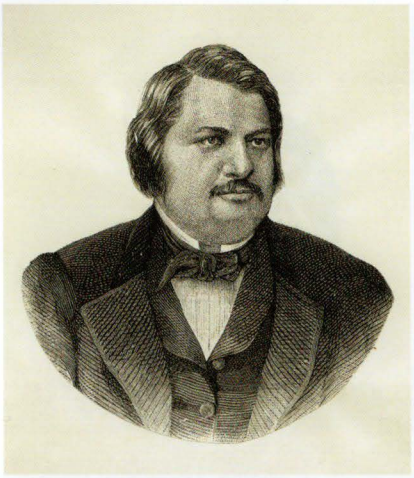
The Mikhailovsky (Engineers') Castle.
Lithograph from drawing by I.I. Charlemagne. Mid-19th cent.

Built in 1797–1801, by architects Vasili Bazhenov and Vincenzo Brenna. In 1819, on the initiative of Grand Duke Nikolas Pavlovich (subsequently Emperor of Russia Nikolas I), the army's Main Engineering School was founded in Mikhailovsky Castle. Since 1823, the building was known as the *Engineers' Castle.*

Military Engineering Academy was placed there. Dostoevsky entered the Academy in 1838, and he then spent six years within its walls.

In his second year of study, yet another tragedy occurred: his father died under unexplained circumstances. From then on, the two eldest brothers Dostoevsky would have to decide their own future. Fyodor matured early, while still a teenager, he had formulated his artistic credo in a letter written right after the death of his father: "I am confident in myself. The human being is a mystery. One must attempt to solve it, and if you spend your whole life solving it, don't say that you wasted your time; I will pursue this mystery because I want to be a human..."

Military engineer in uniform. 1834–1843



Honoré de Balzac. Portrait
from the original daguerreotype. 1840's

After he graduated from the Academy in August of 1843, Dostoevsky was assigned to the Corps of Engineers. This meant that he had to serve from 9 am till 14 pm every day. Though dreaming of "*dedicating himself solely to literature*," he was forced to "*kill time in vain*." After work he would read, go to the theater or indulge in other forms of entertainment. Constantly short of funds, the young Dostoevsky had thousands of plans to earn more, but translating a famous author seemed to him the most feasible way. In mid-19th century, translation was not considered to be especially serious literary work; it was looked down upon – as a mere way to make money. The French writer Honoré de Balzac arrived in Petersburg in the fall of 1843, with great success among the youth of Petersburg. This literary event apparently motivated Dostoevsky's choice of his first literary project, a translation of Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet*. At the end of 1843, he translated 365 pages of a complex French text, all within two to three weeks. "You should know that during the holidays I translated Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet* (wonderful! wonderful!). The translation is incomparable," he wrote to his brother ecstatically. The translation had been done in one fell swoop, but despite all the flaws and liberties taken by the young author, this work demonstrated the talent of the future writer. His translation can be analyzed as a special type of literature — it is not simply Balzac's story and not only Dostoevsky's version of it, but the creative sum of the work of two great novelists. Dostoevsky felt he was a real writer. After that, having barely served less than half a year, he decided to tender his resignation: "I'm as sick of the service as I am of potatoes." In June and July of 1844, his *Eugénie Grandet* translation appeared in the journal *Repertoire and Pantheon*. By August 1844, Dostoevsky left his post. From then on, he would support himself solely as a writer: "I resigned. Just because... Honestly, I couldn't work there any longer. They take away your best time for nothing, I can't enjoy life..."

Dostoevsky's relatives did not believe in his literary calling, not even his brother did. Fyodor had to explain his decision even to him, their life-long affinity not withstanding, though it was together with Mikhail, as a child, that he had dreamed of a literary future: "...whatever I do with my life–whose business is it anyway? I even consider this risk noble, this unwise risk of

changing my circumstances, risking a whole life on a tenuous hope. Maybe I'm making a mistake. But what if I'm not?"

The creative training which Dostoevsky underwent while working on the Balzac novel, as well as the French author's writings themselves, would continue to spur his creative impulses. For the rest of his life, Dostoevsky would consider Balzac an outstanding modern writer, placing him in his pantheon of favorites – Pushkin, Gogol, Cervantes, Schiller, and Dickens. Throughout his entire life, Dostoevsky delighted in their talent and learned from their craft: "...My soul is not prone to its former stormy upheavals. Everything in it is quiet, as in the heart of a man who keeps a deep secret; I am managing pretty well to learn about 'the meaning of life and man'; I can study human characters from the writers with whom the best part of my life flows along freely and joyfully..."

F. Dostoevsky.
Drawing by K. Trutovsky. 1847

Dostoevsky's main literary school was always his reading: "I'm reading passionately, and the reading has a strange effect on me. I read something over again that I'd read a long time ago, and it's as if I receive new inspiration, gain new insight into everything, see everything clearly, and extract from this the ability to create."

A passionate reader, Dostoevsky constantly kept the works of many Western European and Russian writers within his purview. In his works, as well as in his working notes and drafts, he often points to literary landmarks –

The earliest known portrait of Dostoevsky.
"Here is an exact description of the physical appearance of Fyodor Mikhailovich, as he was in 1846: he was of less than average height, and had a broad build, especially in the shoulders and chest; his head was proportioned right, but his forehead was extraordinarily large, and particularly pronounced in its upper regions. His eyes were small, light gray, and extraordinarily lively, his lips were thin and always drawn, which gave his whole face an expression of a kind of concentrated goodness and affection; his was more than blonde, almost white, and extremely fine and soft; his hands and feet were noticeably large. He dressed cleanly and, one could say, elegantly."

From the memoirs of S.D. Janovsky

Dmitry Vasilyevich Grigorovich.
Lithograph by P. Ivanov
from a photograph
by I.A.Alexandrovsky.
1854

D.V.Grigorovich (1822–1899) – Writer and a friend of Dostoevsky's from the Engineering Academy.

In 1844–1845, they shared an apartment. First reader of F.M.Dostoevsky's early literary attempts.

Hamlet, Faust, Don Juan, Chatsky, Don Quixote, etc. The writer needed literary characters from the past in order to comprehend modern man.

Titles, quotes, names of favorite characters and famous writers, ecstatic comments and short critical descriptions frequently occur in Dostoevsky's letters. Almost all of Dostoevsky's protagonists are readers, and the books that he chooses for them to read are never accidental. The main character of his story *The Eternal Husband* studies Apollon Grigoriev's article on "predatory and humble types" in literature, Nastasia Filippovna (*The Idiot*) reads *Madame Bovary* on the eve of her death, and Rogozhin (*The Idiot*) reads Solovyov's *History*. Stepan Trofimovich (*Demons*) acquaints himself with the novelty of the year, Hugo's novel *The Laughing Man*, and rereads Chernyshevsky's *What is to be Done?*, and Liputin (*Demons*) reads Considérant. The illustrated album *Balzac's Women* is seen on Stavrogin's table (*Demons*), while on Sonia Marmeladova's table (*Crime and Punishment*), there is the New Testament. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dmitry Karamazov is taken with Schiller, while Smerdyakov reads the teachings of St. Isaac the Syrian... These and similar books, read by Dostoevsky or his characters, are part of the Museum's Literary Exhibit.

Dostoevsky's characters are not only readers, however. They are creative personalities, each one trying to live up to his/her potential. Makar Devushkin (*Poor Folk*) reveals his talents in the epistolary genre, clearly dreaming of literary creativity: "And what if — really, after all, the thought does sometimes come into my head...well, what if I wrote something, what would happen then? Well, for example, let's say suddenly, from out of nowhere, a book came out with the title – 'The Poems of Makar Devushkin'!"

11 Vladimirsky Prospect, on the corner of Grafsky Lane.
Formerly The Prianichnikov House

The prospective writer settled here in 1842. His younger brother Andrei, who also lived here for a while under the elder brothers' guardianship, recollected: *"The apartment was very light and cheerful; it consisted of three rooms, an entryway and a kitchen; the first room was common, as if a parlor; on one side there was a brother's room, on the other side there was a tiny but absolutely separate room for me."*

In this apartment, till the end of May 1845, Dostoevsky worked hard on his first literary work – the novel *Poor Falk*.

In the novel *The Insulted and the Injured*, Ivan Petrovich is a young writer. In *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov, a former Law student, publishes an article entitled "On Crime," and one of the characters in *The Idiot*, Ippolit Terentiev, writes a confession, "My Necessary Statement." In *Demons*, almost everyone is a writer (Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky, Karmazinov, Shigalev, Lembke, Lebyadkin). The high point of literary craft in Dostoevsky's characters is Ivan Karamazov's "poem" entitled "The Grand Inquisitor." His characters' works reveal their inner worlds and, along with the books which Dostoevsky chooses for them to read, their writing also functions as additional indications of their personalities.

Dostoevsky's own first attempts at writing are associated with his years in the Academy, where he dreamed of "the sublime and beautiful." He was taken with Hoffman and Schiller, and planned to write a novel "on Venetian life." Using themes from his favorite poets, Schiller and Pushkin, the future writer composed dramas of the same titles – *Marie Stuart* and *Boris Godunov*. These first compositions have not survived – Dostoevsky destroyed them, possibly sensing their lack of originality. At some point, a truth became clear to him: "there is nothing more fantastic than reality

Church of the Vladimir Mother of God Icon.
Lithograph by Ferdinand-Victor Perrot. 1841

Out of the windows of his apartment on the corner of Vladimirsky Prospect and Grafsky Lane, Dostoevsky would feast his eyes upon the Vladimirskaya Church. The last address of Dostoevsky became 5 Kuznechny Lane, from where he could also see the cupolas of the Vladimirskaya Church, albeit from another perspective. It was here that the writer wrote his last novel, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879–1880).

itself." Later the writer named this the moment of his second birth: "It was as if I understood something in that minute that before had only stirred in me, but not been understood; as if I saw through into something new, into a completely new and unfamiliar world, only known by some sort of mysterious signs. I think it was precisely in that minute that my existence began..." In this instant, Dostoevsky had captured the soul of Petersburg, by grasping the duality of existence in Petersburg. The city seemed to him like a puppet theater created for mockery by some practical joker: "And I began to look around, and suddenly I saw these strange faces. They were all strange, marvelous figures, and they were completely ordinary, no Don Carloses or Posas [from Schiller], but just titular councilors in all respects. Someone hidden behind this whole fantastic crowd was making faces at me and jerking strings; the springs and puppets moved, and he kept laughing and laughing!"

Vissarion Grigorevich Belinsky. From the portrait by K.Gorbunov. 1843

Nikolay Alekseevich Nekrasov. Photograph. Beginning of the 1860's (?)

V.G.Belinsky (1811–1848). One of the first to recognize the young writer's talent. It was his enthusiastic review that opened the doors of literary salons and publishing houses to young F.Dostoevsky.

N.A.Nekrasov (1821–1878). Well-known poet, publisher and editor. He introduced Dostoevsky to Petersburg's literary circles in 1845. Dostoevsky's first original work, the novel *Poor Folk*, was published in Nekrasov's *A Petersburg Collection*. In his literary journal *Otechestvennye Zapiski* ("*Annals of the Fatherland*"), he first published the novel *The Adolescent*. Dostoevsky visited N.A.Nekrasov before his death. Later he took part in the funeral and then dedicated a special chapter in *The Diary of a Writer* to Nekrasov's memory.

Dostoevsky began his literary career by creating an apologia for the "little man." His challenge could be sensed even in the title of his story *Poor Folk*. The protagonist of Dostoevsky's first literary work was not a romantic hero but a poor clerk. The writer's object of analysis was the everyday life of unimportant, defenseless people who had been humiliated and insulted by social inequity and who had been driven to despair by the inescapability of their existence, but who had not lost the ability to dream, love, understand others, and simply remained human beings. "*To find the human in man*" – this call would become the constant formula of Dostoevsky's art. The famous critic Vissarion Belinsky, whose opinion was decisive in Russian literature of the period, read Dostoevsky's first manuscript and pronounced

Ivan Ivanovich Panaev.
Engraving by F. Brockhaus.
1850's

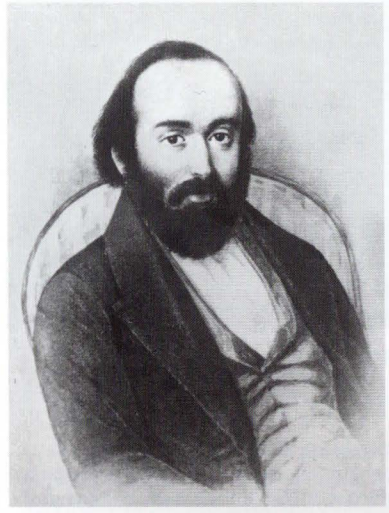
I.I.Panaev (1812–1862) – A novelist well-known in the 1840s, also a journalist, critic, and co-editor of the literary journal *Sovremennik* ("*The Contemporary*"). Dostoevsky met him in 1845. In the first half of 1846, Dostoevsky visited Panaev's home frequently.

the prophetic words, "You, as an artist, have been given the gift of a free and elevated truth. Value your gift and remain true, and you will be a great writer."

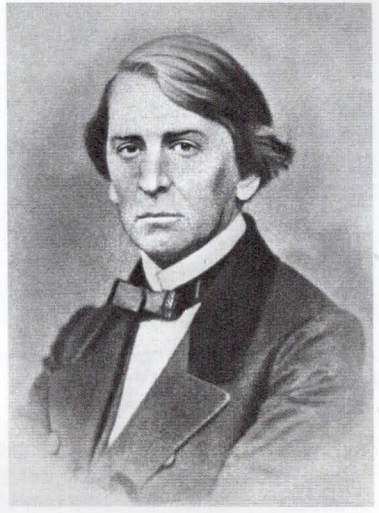
All of Petersburg began talking of Dostoevsky: "Well, brother, I don't think my fame will ever reach these heights again. Everywhere there is incredible respect and awful curiosity about me... Everyone considers me a miracle. I can't even open my mouth without it being repeated in all corners that Dostoevsky said such-and-such, Dostoevsky wants to do such-and-such..." He started to frequent various literary salons and often socialized with writers, journalists, and critics. He also continued to write. His next two novellas appeared – *The Double* and *The Landlady* – as well as some stories.

Dostoevsky was always actively interested in "*current reality*," as he called contemporary life. He visited the theaters and exhibits, studied philosophy and history, acquainted himself with various theories and studies, and in general was always open to anything new. While still young, he would have to pay dearly for his candor, enthusiasm, and his tendency to dream.

Dostoevsky's close friend, the poet Aleksei Pleshcheev, introduced him to Mikhail Petrashevsky, who hosted gatherings of brash and very educated young people dreaming of a better future for Russia and fascinated by the ideas of socialist utopianism and the French Revolution. Delighted with Charles Fourier's theory of the golden age of humanity, they called themselves Fourierists and discussed the political and social questions creating a stir in Russian society at that time. Dostoevsky became an active



Mikhail Vasilievich
Butashevich-Petrashevsky.
From the watercolor
by an unknown artist.1840's



Aleksey Nikolayevich
Pleshcheev.
Photograph, end of 1850's

M.V. Butashevich-Petrashevsky (1821–1866). Law specialist and translator in the Department of Foreign Affairs, he was eccentric, a liberal, and an atheist. He graduated from the Tsarskoye Selo Lyceum and Saint Petersburg State University with a degree in law. He was an owner of an extensive collection of books, including those banned in Russia. As the editor of the *Pocket Dictionary of Foreign Words*, Petrashevsky used the *Dictionary* to disseminate and popularize revolutionary ideas. He also organized literary-political meetings ("The Fridays"), marked by utopian socialist views. At these meetings, the existent government order was criticized, and various possible ways to change the present state of affairs were examined. Ever after 1848, his activity was under the authorities' surveillance. Arrested because of a denunciation on April 23, 1849, together with the other members of the *Petrashevtsy* circle, Petrashevsky himself was sentenced to death but granted a last-minute pardon and exiled to the prison in Siberia. In 1856, he was released from the prison but had to still remain in exile in settlement in Irkutsk. He wrote for local newspapers, also practicing the law. Time and again, he appealed for his sentence of 1849 to be reviewed. Petrashevsky died in the village Belskoye, District of Yeniseisk.

participant in these gatherings, which took place on Fridays in Petrashevsky's home. The Petrashevsky Society significantly expanded the young Dostoevsky's range of reading. Instead of a random selection of books, it became strictly organized according to the plan of the Socialist circle's common library. The contents of Petrashevsky's library were broad-ranging – along with the main works of the French socialists (Fourier, Considérant, Cabet, Proudhon, Louis Blanc), there were also books by

B. Kostygov. House of M.V. Petrashevsky at Sadovaia Street (historic №118, now №111). 1993

Petrashevsky lived in the outskirts of Petersburg, in Kolomna, on Pokrovskaya Square (now Turgenev Square). Petrashevsky's home, where the circle's members gathered "*was a small wooden house typical for the old Kolomna's district; the top of the roof was decorated with carved ridge; wood-carvings were also under the windows; a little porch led into the street...*" (P.N.Stolpyansky). Now multistoried stone buildings are towering up on the site where formerly Petrashevsky's small house had stood.

Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Lammenais, the novels of George Sand, Auguste Comte's course in positivist philosophy, Feuerbach, Max Stirner, Karl Marx, and others.

In 1848, a wave of revolution swept through Europe. Nicholas I was extremely frightened by it, and he ordered the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs to "strengthen its investigations into those societies." An agent was sent to Petrashevsky's circle, and as a result of his report all the participants of the meeting, including Dostoevsky, were arrested on the night of April 23, 1849.

At the dawn of his creative strength (he was only twenty seven), Dostoevsky was torn from his literary endeavors. For eight months he was held in solitary confinement in the Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg, then sent for four years' hard labor to Omsk Prison, and afterwards he lived in exile for six years in Siberia, in the town of Semipalatinsk. His sudden arrest, in April of 1849, did not interrupt Dostoevsky's reading. In the fortress, while the investigation into his case proceeded, he read two accounts of pilgrimages to the Holy Land, the works of Saint Dmitry Rostovsky, issues of the journal *Notes from the Fatherland*, and historical works. "But it would be best of all," he wrote his brother, "if you sent me the Bible (both Testaments)."

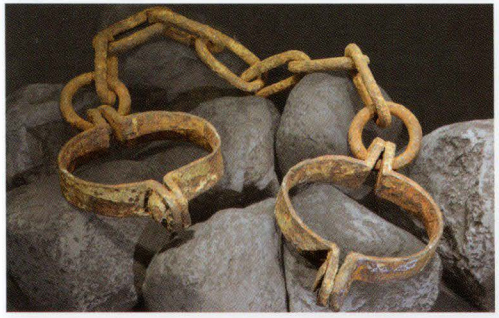
The Investigative Commission declared the "Petrashevsky affair" a conspiracy of ideas. The circle had not managed to do anything concrete. Dostoevsky, for instance, was convicted for reading aloud and the desire –

B. Kostygov, Semyonovsky Square, December 22, 1849. View from Obvodny Canal. 1993

The Semenovsky Life Guards Regiment Parade place (the Semyonovsky Square) was formed in 1799–1804, on the territory between Zagorodny Avenue, Ruzovskaya Street, Zvenigorodskaya Street and Obvodny Canal. It included a firing range, drills, and engineering grounds, serving both as a place for public executions (since 1849) and for people's promenade (since 1898). Present-day Pionerskaya Square occupies a part of the former vast parade place.

only the desire! — to circulate Belinsky's forbidden letter to Gogol. Nicholas I, however, decided to punish them so cruelly that it would serve as a reminder to their contemporaries — he conceived a monstrous show, and wrote its script himself.

Early on the morning of December 22, 1849, the prisoners were brought to Semyonovsky Square, where the spectacle of public execution was to be enacted. To the accompaniment of a drum, the sentence was read aloud, ending with the words: "death by firing squad." At the very last moment, the sentence was commuted to hard labor and service in the army. (Nicholas I had decided to amuse himself and even used state funds to finance this feigned execution). Dostoevsky received four years of penal servitude followed by lifelong service in the guards. The Petrashevsky group experienced some awful moments in anticipation of their death. Dostoevsky would later describe these moments in his novel *The Idiot*, in the words of Prince Myshkin: "The man was brought up onto the platform with some others, and the sentence of execution by firing squad, for political crime, was read out to him. In about twenty minutes a pardon was likewise read, and a different degree of punishment designated; however, in the interval between the two sentences, twenty minutes or at the least a quarter of an hour, he had lived with the certain conviction that in a few minutes he would suddenly die. [...] He remembered everything with unusual clarity and said that he would never forget anything that happened in those minutes. About



Prisoner's leg irons.
Russia.
19th cent.

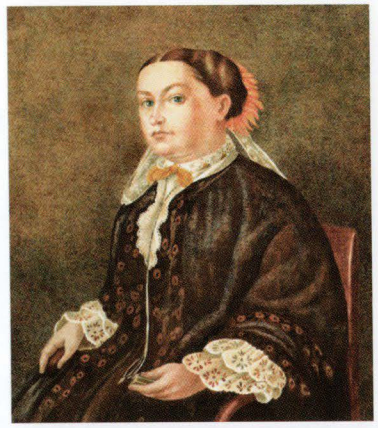
"During the three days that followed my arrival, I did not go to work. Some respite was always given to newly arrived prisoners, in order to allow them to recover from their fatigue. The second day I had to go out of the convict prison in order to be put in irons. My chain was not of the regulation pattern; it was composed of rings which gave forth a clear sound, so I heard other convicts say. I had to wear them externally over my clothes, whereas my companions had chains formed, not of rings, but of four links, as thick as the finger, and fastened together by three links which were worn beneath the trousers. To the central ring, a strip of leather was fastened, tied to a girdle fastened over the shirt." It is very difficult for a convict who is still a novice to get his things off, for he must know how to undo the leather straps which fasten on the chains. These leather straps are buckled over the shirt, just beneath the ring which encloses the leg. One pair of straps costs sixty kopecks, and each convict is obliged to get himself a pair, for it would be impossible to walk without their assistance. The ring does not hug the leg too tightly. One can pass the finger between the iron and the flesh; but the ring rubs against the calf, so that in a single day the convict who walks without leather straps, gets his skin broken."

(F. Dostoevsky. *The House of the Dead).*

twenty steps from the platform near which stood the crowd and the soldiers, three posts had been planted, since the criminals were several in number. The first three were led to the posts, bound, and dressed in death robes (long white smocks), and white hoods were pulled over their eyes so the guns would not be visible... [...] A priest went up to each of them with a cross. So there were five minutes left to live, no more. He said that those five minutes seemed to him like an endless period, an enormous wealth of time... [...] A church stood not far away, and the top of the cathedral with its gilded roof twinkled in the bright sun. He remembered that he looked at that roof, and at the rays twinkling from it, with an awful persistence; he could not tear himself away from those rays. It seemed to him that the rays were his new nature, that he would somehow flow into them in three minutes' time..."

On the evening of the same day Dostoevsky wrote to his brother: "Life is life everywhere, life is within us, and not in the outer world. People will be next to me, and to be a human being among people and to remain one forever, whatever misfortunes happen, not to fall into despair and

Praskovia Egorovna Annenkova.
Copy from the watercolor
by N. Bestuzhev. 1836



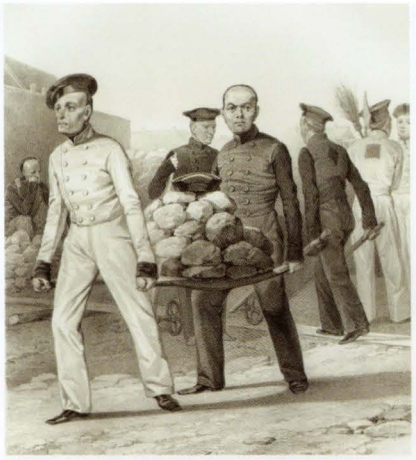
Natalia Dmitrievna Fonvizina.
Copy from the painting
by M. Znamensky. 1850's

While being transported from Petersburg to the Omsk Prison, the convicts came to Tobolsk. Decembrists' wives, N.D.Fonvizina and P.E.Annenkova, managed to arrange a meeting with Dostoevsky and Sergei Durov, who were being temporally held in the Tobolsk Transfer Prison. The women presented the prisoners with a copy of the New Testament. All his life Dostoevsky carefully preserved this book; he would use it during difficult times, opening it at random and reading whatever he found therein.

perish–this is what life is, this is its task. I have come to realize this. This idea has entered into my body and blood."

On Christmas Eve (by the Orthodox calendar), all of the Petrashevsky members were put in leg irons and sent to Siberia with prison convoy. Dostoevsky served his term of hard labor at the Omsk Military Prison Camp, where it was forbidden to read or write. This was exactly what he had feared: "How many images, having survived and then been created by me again, will perish and fade in my head or spread out in my blood like poison! Yes, if I am not allowed to write, I will die. Better to be locked up for fifteen years with a pen in my hands." The only book that prisoners were allowed to have – The New Testament – Dostoevsky got due to the wives of Decembrists*, P. Annenkova and N. Fonvizina, who met the Petrashevsky group on their way to Omsk Prison, providing him with a copy. According to one memoirist, Dostoevsky observed these regulations and would later refuse to accept books brought to him by visitors. The only exception he made was for his beloved Dickens – while in the hospital, he read *David Copperfield* and *The Pickwick Papers*.

* The Decembrists were insurgents from inside court circles who waged an unsuccessful revolt against tsarist rule in December 1825. Their wives chose to follow their husbands into exile in Siberia.



Prisoners of Category One (serving time). Editions Lemercier, Paris. 1830

Senior and junior officers of the Siberian Line Battalions. 1833–1843

At prison, Dostoevsky laboured hard. He would pound alabaster and make lug bricks at the brickyard. Work at the yard was considered to be most arduous. Each prisoner was obliged to fulfill the "lesson" – assigned daily norm – to make 200–250 bricks, having done all the spadework: remove and knead the clay, bring water, and then put together final products. Dostoyevsky would spin heavy grindstone wheels at engineering shops and learn other building qualifications. Being a nobleman Dostoevsky was always treated more strictly than the other prisoners.

For four years, Dostoevsky lived in barracks with murderers and thieves. Afterwards he never regretted these years: "...during my four years in prison, I finally learned how to discern the human in criminals. Would you believe–among them, there are deep, strong, beautiful characters, and what bliss it was to discover gold under a rough shell... How many types and characters of people I have carried away with me from the prison camp! I became accustomed to them, and for that reason, I think, I know them pretty well. How many stories of tramps and thieves, and in general of all kinds of dark, joyless life! It would fill up whole volumes. What wonderful people. In general my time was not wasted. If not Russia, I at least came to know the Russian people well, to a degree that most people perhaps do not."

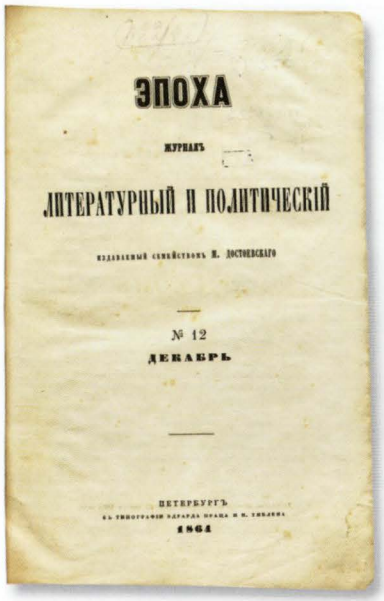
After the Omsk Prison, Dostoevsky was transferred to the city of Semipalatinsk as a private in the Seventh Line Battalion. In the first letter he wrote to his brother upon release, he began asking for books: "If you can, send me this year's journals, at least *Notes from the Fatherland*. But this is what is absolutely necessary: I need (urgently) ancient historians (in French translation) and modern historians, economists, and also Church fathers... Send them right away." These requests were repeated in every letter: "Please understand how much I need this spiritual nourishment!"

Maria Dmitrievna Dostoevskaya. Photograph. 1863

F.M. Dostoevsky in junior officer's uniform. Photograph by S.Leibin, Semipalatinsk. 1859

At times military service seemed harder to Dostoevsky than the civilian prison had been — the absurd orders, marching, and drills, everything he had hated so much at the Military Engineering Academy. Dostoevsky lived in Semipalatinsk for over five years, during which time he constantly thought of returning to Petersburg. Nevertheless, in Semipalatinsk he found a congenial atmosphere and new friends. He would associate with the young Kazakh scholar Chokan Valikhanov, whom he had first met in Omsk not long before his transfer to Semipalatinsk. Especially meaningful for Dostoevsky was his acquaintance with Alexander Yegorovich Vrangel, a young lawyer who had received a post in the town. Vrangel took a lively interest in Dostoevsky's affairs, and supported the writer during this difficult period in his life. Vrangel's memoirs, written years later, serve as the most valuable source for Dostoevsky's biography of this period. After his release from hard labor and his move to Semipalatinsk, Dostoevsky was able to return to his creative work. In Siberia, he wrote *My Uncle's Dream* and *The Village of Stepanchikovo*.

After the death of Nicholas I in 1855, the situation in the country changed, and, with the help of his Petersburg friends, Dostoevsky managed to receive a junior officer's rank. In April or May of 1854, he met Maria Dmitrievna Isaeva. She had had a difficult life: her first husband had died of alcoholism, leaving her with a six-year-old son and absolutely no financial



ЭПОХА

ЖУРНАЛЪ

ЛИТЕРАТУРНЫЙ И ПОЛИТИЧЕСКІЙ

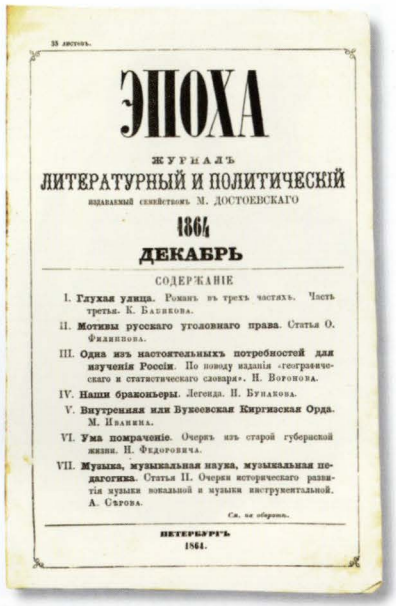
ИЗДАВАЕМЫЙ СЕМЕЙСТВОМЪ М. ДОСТОЕВСКАГО

№ 12

ДЕКАБРЬ

ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ

1864



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ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ

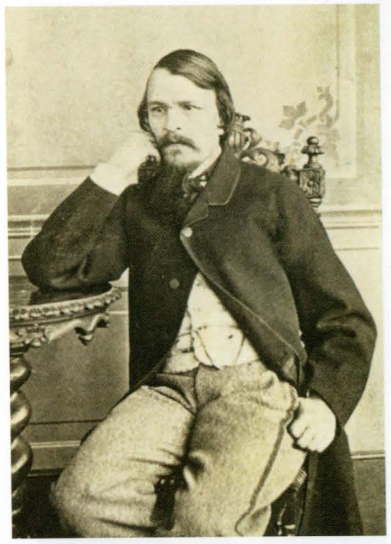
1864.

Cover and title page of *The Epoch journal.* 1864

means. For Dostoevsky, returning to life after the prison camp, his acquaintance with this young, intelligent woman brought a feeling of freedom and normal human happiness. He came to love Maria, and decided to take responsibility for her future. "She is a young woman still, twenty-eight years old, pretty, very educated, very smart, kind, friendly, gracious, with an excellent and generous heart," he wrote to his brother Mikhail. On February 6, 1857, they were married in the Hodegetria Church in the town of Kuznetsk, and two years later Dostoevsky was finally permitted to leave Siberia. In the Minister of Internal Affairs' circular on Dostoevsky's discharge "from service due to illness," he was directed "to reside in Tver upon his release," and he was also thereby forbidden to enter Moscow, St. Petersburg, or their provinces. A few months before the writer's arrival in Tver, the "Matter of Establishing a Secret Surveillance of Ensign Dostoevsky" was begun in the Tver military governor's office. Police surveillance was discontinued only in 1875. For twenty six years, beginning with his arrest in 1849, Dostoevsky had therefore been under the control and surveillance of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, all his correspondence had been read, all his movements traced, at home or abroad. Perhaps it is just because he himself constantly sensed his own lack of freedom that his characters so energetically stand up for the right to decide their own fate, so actively take upon themselves the problem of solving "the accursed questions," and so badly want to live exclusively "according to their own foolish will."

Although his legal rights, as well as his social rank within the nobility, had been restored after the Siberian exile, Dostoevsky was still required to live "under supervision". He spent half a year in Tver, all the while trying to receive permission to live in Petersburg: "Now I am confined in Tver, and that's worse than Semipalatinsk... Gloom, cold, stone houses, no movement, no interests – there's not even a decent library. A real prison! I intend to get out of here as soon as possible..."

At the end of December 1859, exactly ten years after being sent to prison, Dostoevsky returned to Petersburg. For literature, a decade is a very long period: many new writers and new works had appeared by then. Dostoevsky decided to reestablish his literary reputation without delay. Together with his brother Mikhail, he began to publish a literary-artistic journal called *Time*, and somewhat later, another called *The Epoch*. The two brothers attracted the leading writers and journalists of the day as contributors to their journals. Fyodor Dostoevsky composed the following announcement of *Time's* publication: "We are convinced, ultimately, that we [Russians] are also a separate nationality, original to the highest degree, and that our task is to create our own new form, grounded in our native soil, in the spirit and roots of our people." This was the programmatic statement of the new movement called *pochvennichestvo*, a call for a return to cultural roots (from the Russian word for "the soil"). Its main tenets, the affirmation of Russian national originality and a critical attitude toward the western-oriented



Mikhail Mikhailovich Dostoevsky. Photograph. Beginning of 1860's

M.M.Dostoevsky (1820–1864)– F.M. Dostoevsky's elder brother and his most intimate confidant. A writer, translator, and publisher in his own right. The brothers always had a close and friendly relationship. Their correspondence has provided the main source for a reconstruction of Dostoevsky's early creative plans. Together with F.M. Dostoevsky, his brother Mikhail studied at the boarding school. In 1838, Mikhail entered the army at the engineering squads in Petersburg; then in Revel (Today, Tallinn, Estonia). In 1848, Mikhail Jr. – Dostoevsky's brother, not father – retired from the army and settled in Petersburg. While F.M. Dostoevsky was serving his term in prison and exile, his brother ran errands for him and carried out his requests. After the writer's release, M.M. Dostoevsky helped him return to the literary world. From 1861 to 1864, the brothers published the journals *Time* and *The Epoch* together. After brother Mikhail's death, Fyodor Mikhailovich took care of his family.

F.M. Dostoevsky. Photograph
by M.B. Tulinov. St.Petersburg. 1861

A.P.Suslova. Photograph
by A.O.Karelin. 1876

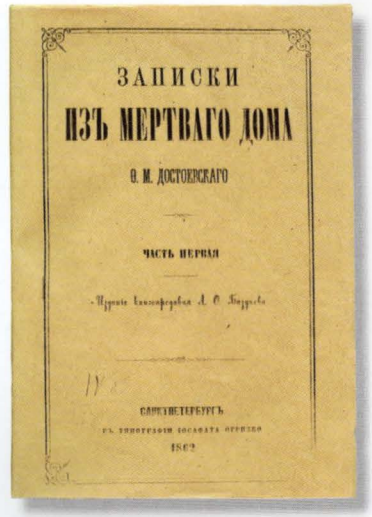
Apollinaria Prokofievna Suslova (1839–1918), short story writer, authoress of the memoirs "*Years of closeness with Dostoevsky*" (M., 1928). In 1861, the journal *Time/Vremya* published her short novel *Until/Pokuda*. In the autobiographical novel *She, a Stranger; He, One of Them/ Chuzhaya i Svoy*, she depicted her relationship with Dostoevsky. In 1862, they jointly undertook a journey to Europe. Their very complicated relationship ended with a rupture in 1865. Later, she was married to V.V. Rozanov (1880–1887).

intelligentsia, were, in essence, close to Slavophile ideas*. Even in 1860, however, Dostoevsky was thinking seriously about the unification and reconciliation of all European movements: "With great reverence we divine and foresee that the nature of our future activity is destined to be universal to the highest degree; that the Russian idea will perhaps be the synthesis of all the ideas which Europe has been developing with such determination and courage in her separate nationalities, and that perhaps everything that is antagonistic in these ideas will find reconciliation and further development with the Russian people."

The Dostoevsky brothers also published young authors in their journals, among them the twenty-year-old Apollinaria Suslova. She played the role of a *femme fatale* in Dostoevsky's life, and her character traits were reflected afterwards in the images of his "infernal" female characters (Polina

* Slavophilism was a mid-19th century movement that advocated Slavic and specifically Russian culture over that of the West.

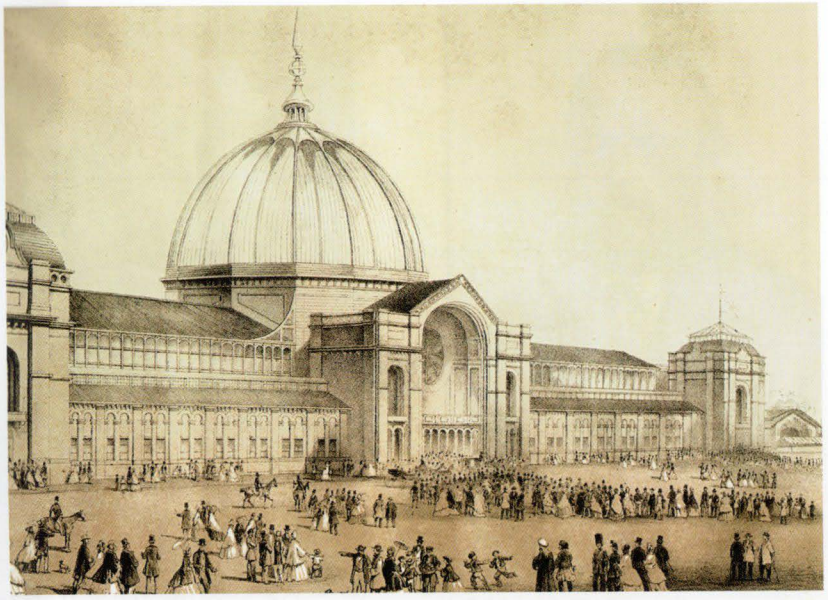
F.M. Dostoevsky.
Lithograph by P.F. Borel. 1862



The novel
Notes from the House of the Dead
(cover of the first edition). SPb, 1862

in *The Gambler*, Nastasia Filippovna in *The Idiot*, Katerina Ivanovna in *The Brothers Karamazov*). Later, after his break with her, Dostoevsky wrote: "Apollinaria is a great egoist. Her egotism and self-involvement are colossal. She demands everything, all kinds of perfection from people, refusing to acknowledge any other good qualities; she does not forgive the smallest imperfection. She herself shirks even the smallest responsibilities toward people...I still love her, very much, but I don't want to love her..." It was as if he himself had written his affair with Suslova: its protagonists' irrational behavior, the extreme emotional tension, and unpredictable actions. Their relationship started unexpectedly and broke off rather quickly, almost without having developed at all, and left Dostoevsky with painful memories and the vivid image of an extraordinary woman.

The writer's next works, *The Insulted and the Injured* (1861) and *Notes from the House of the Dead* (1861–62) appeared in installments in the Dostoevskys' journals. The latter novel restored his former fame, and people began to call him the new Virgil. It was the first novel about prison in Russia, and one of its main ideas was strikingly paradoxical: criminals "are perhaps the most talented, the strongest of all our people." While in prison, Dostoevsky had reexamined his previous convictions. During the Petrashevsky gatherings he had, together with the others, pondered the possibility of revolutionary overthrow of the government. Now, however, Dostoevsky was completely convinced that the path of violence could not bring happiness to humankind. In his post-prison works, the writer would attempt to divert Russia from this violent path.



The building of the International Great London Exposition of 1862
(a.k.a. The Crystal Palace). Designed by F.Fowke.From the engraving of 19th cent.

While in prison, Dostoevsky thought much about the meaning of revolution and the ideas behind it. Even before his arrest he had dreamed of going to the West in order to see with his own eyes what western revolutions had given to the common man, and how they had changed his life. The trip to Europe, however, foundered and Dostoevsky was sent, with a prison convoy, in the opposite direction. He made it to Europe only in 1862. He had planned out his travel route beforehand; he was to visit fifteen cities of Western Europe in 2½ months. "Lord, how much I expected from that trip! It's all right if I don't manage to see anything in detail, I thought, and yet I saw everything, went everywhere; and yet everything that matters comes together in something whole, some sort of general panorama. I think of the entire 'country of holy miracles' all at once from a bird's-eye view, like the Promised Land from a mountain top." He traveled with the certainty that he would not like the West, and did not, in fact, during his first trip. Berlin left him with a "sour taste": "Suddenly, from first sight, I noticed that Berlin is unbelievably similar to Petersburg. The same bounded streets, the same smells... was it worth putting myself through two days in a train car to see the same thing that I had fled?" Paris turned out to be "an extremely boring city," "and if there weren't actually a great many more-than-wonderful things there, you could really die of boredom..."

In the summer of 1862, he also made a few days' trip to London to see Alexander Herzen, and they talked a lot about destinies of Russia and

Paris. North Train Station [Gare du Nord]. Postcard. 19th cent.

Europe. In that city, he saw the Crystal Palace, a grandiose glass and steel structure built to house the London International Exposition. Dostoevsky was strongly impressed with the Crystal Palace which became a symbol of bourgeois civilization in his eyes.

He came to the conclusion that the French Revolution's motto of "Liberté, égalité, fraternité" was a false, shallow phrase, and that now still, just as before the Revolution, only he who had a million had liberty. He was annoyed by the formula of bourgeois satiety "*eat sweet and sit soft*." In his eyes, these things were not worth living for. He described his impressions of Europe in his *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (1863), a unique set of philosophical-travel essays.

Dostoevsky worked almost simultaneously on *Winter Notes* and on plans for *Notes from Underground* (1864), whose main idea is the impossibility of basing a human life "on a foundation of reason". Dostoevsky's Underground Man does not agree with the utopian ideas of world harmony or the Crystal Palace as its symbolic representation,* a world harmony totally mechanical, in which he would only be a tiny cog. The Underground Man does not want to be forced into happiness: "man has always and everywhere, no matter who he may be, loved to act just as he wants, and not at all as reason and benefit dictate." The Underground Man's confession is Dostoevsky's philosophical introduction to his cycle of long novels to follow.

* The shining symbol of the London International Exposition of 1861, the Crystal Palace represented the highest scientific and technological achievements of the day.

"House of the old pawnbroker". Modern address: 104 Griboedov Canal Embankment; also 15 Srednyaya Podyacheskaya

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

In mid-September 1865, Dostoevsky wrote from Wiesbaden, to Mikhail Katkov, publisher of the journal *Russian Messenger*, describing an outline for his new work: "The idea for the story... is a psychological account of a certain crime. The setting is in modern times, this year. A young man, a petty bourgeois by birth, expelled from the university, lives in extreme poverty. He gives in, through his own carelessness and shaky beliefs, to certain strange 'unfinished' ideas of the day, and decides to get out of his miserable position once and for all. He decides to kill a certain old woman of low social standing who lends money at interest. This old woman is stupid, unfeeling, diseased, greedy, and exacts outrageous interest; she is evil, oppresses others, and torments her younger sister, who works for her. 'She is good for nothing,' 'Why is she alive?', 'Does she help anyone at all?' etc. – these questions confuse the young man. He decides to kill her, to rob her. His object is to make his mother, who lives in the provinces, happy, and to rescue his sister, who is in the service of a certain landowner's family, from the lustful attentions of the head of this family – attentions which threaten her with ruin. Afterwards, he wants to finish school, go abroad, and then, for the rest of his life, to be honest, solid, and unwavering in the fulfillment of his 'human debt to mankind.' This, of course, will "make up" for his crime, if it is a crime indeed — this action against an unfeeling, stupid, evil, and diseased old woman who doesn't know herself why she is alive in the world, and who perhaps in a month would die of her own accord..." This is a full description of

B. Kostygov. *Perspective view of Srednyaya Meshchanskaya (Grazhdanskaya) Street. Raskolnikov and the petty bourgeois*. 1998–2002

The topography of Dostoevsky's novels is uniquely precise. Researchers have located several possible addresses in the former Stoliarny Lane, which completely fit the description of the house where, according to the novel, Rodion Raskolnikov lived. The most probable location is the house at 19 Grazhdanskaya Street, which is marked with a memorial plaque honoring Dostoevsky.

Rodion Raskolnikov, the main character of the first of Dostoevsky's long novels, *Crime and Punishment*.

The problem of a criminal's mindset is an "eternal," pervasive theme in world literature, one Dante, Shakespeare, Schiller, and Pushkin have all examined. Even as a teenager, in 1835, Dostoevsky had read, in the journal *Reading Library*, Balzac's novel *Père Goriot*, a novel which was destined to leave a visible mark on all of Dostoevsky's own work. Almost 50 years later, in 1880, Dostoevsky, already a mature writer, would recall this novel while preparing his famous *Pushkin Speech*: "In one of his novels Balzac has a young man who, in anguish over a moral decision which he does not have the power to solve, turns to his friend, a student, and asks him: 'Listen, imagine that you are poor, you don't have a dime, and then somewhere in China there's a decrepit, ill Mandarin, and without moving from Paris all you would have to do is say, 'Die, Mandarin,' and he would die. In exchange for his

D. Shmarinov. *Raskolnikov and Sonya.* 1945

death, some wizard would send you a great fortune, and no one would find out. The important thing is that he's somewhere in China, he's a Mandarin, it's the same as if it were on the moon or Sirius. So would you want to say, 'Die, Mandarin!' to get the money right now?' The student answers, '*Est-il bien vieux ton mandarin? Eh bien non, je ne veux pas*!'" ["Is he very old, your Mandarin? Well, no, I don't want to!"]

Balzac's protagonist poses a moral dilemma: whether to transgress for the sake of wealth acquired through bloodshed, whether to kill or not to kill the old Mandarin by his own will. Dostoevsky transfers this dilemma to Russian soil. His characters, however, deal with these "fateful" ideas on the practical level, not in the abstract.

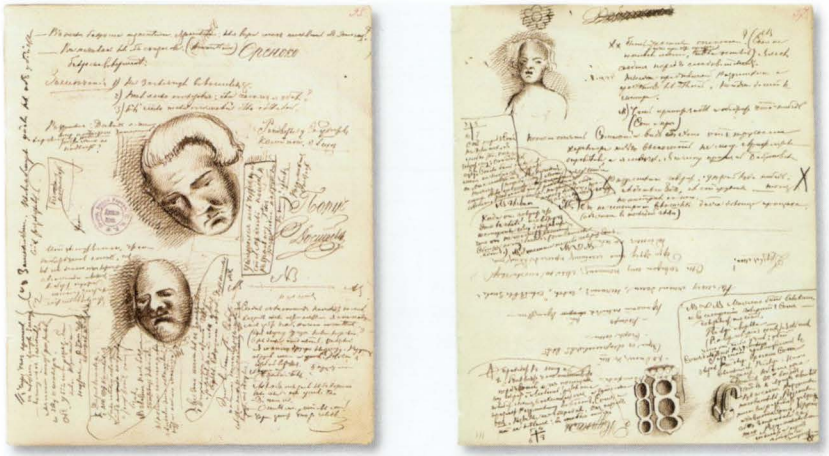
What tempts Raskolnikov is the same utilitarian ethics which Dostoevsky's earlier "paradoxalist," in *Notes from the Underground*, rebelled against. According to these ethics, human behavior derives from the principle of "rationalist egotism." The Underground Man, on the other hand, is convinced that the whole meaning of human existence lies in the assertion of irrational will. He therefore categorically resists the allegedly "mathematical" arguments of reason, refuting them with his own statement: "The only thing man needs is independent will, whatever that independence costs and whatever it leads to." Dostoevsky's next individualist character, Raskolnikov, does commit a "utilitarian" crime, according to his theory of rationalist egotism, in order to test whether he, like Napoleon, can break the law but avoid feeling like a criminal. By letting this theory carried into practice and *ad absurdum*, Dostoevsky posed the problem of asserting one's individuality, and worked it out in the contrast between abstract theory and a revolting concrete crime. Besides,

V. Pavlov. *First Acquaintance (Raskolnikov and Marmeladov).* 1970

Raskolnikov's calculated crime is not only an assertion of his own individuality; his rather heady concern for the poor and destitute reveals his desire to precipitate an era of utopian harmony. According to Dostoevsky, however, forced good, and especially good brought about "by bloodshed," turns into terrible evil, bringing about suffering and death. Dostoevsky's tragic characters, including Raskolnikov, are simultaneously guilty and not guilty – their questions always remain open. As a rule, they separate themselves from people, draw into themselves, and "back themselves into a corner," all in order to remain alone with their fixed ideas. Their loneliness gives them an illusory feeling of freedom and their own exclusivity. "Truly great people, I think, should sense a great sadness in the world," Raskolnikov says to the investigator Porfiry Petrovich, acutely and painfully aware of the world's tragedy and imperfection. Against his own nature, which rebels against murder, Raskolnikov commits a crime in order to prove to himself that he is one of the "chosen" few.

"Mysterious are the paths by which God finds man": it is with these words that Dostoevsky wanted to conclude *Crime and Punishment*. The complicated and contradictory nature of the novel's protagonist, however, turned out to be uncontrollable even for the writer who had created him. A few days after the crime, Raskolnikov, running amok, considers emigrating to America: "It's better to run away completely... far away... to America, and to hell with them!» In working through the novel's finale, Dostoevsky thought of ending it in a different way, in a third variant: "Raskolnikov goes to shoot himself." These two paths – America and suicide – are equivalent for Dostoevsky. The fate of another character in the novel, Svidrigailov, combines these two paths symbolically, as equivalent on the protagonist's mind: "'Brother, I am going to foreign lands.' 'Foreign lands?' 'To America.' 'To America?' Svidrigailov took out a revolver and cocked it..."

In the final version, Dostoevsky's main protagonist comes to a moral renewal made possible in large part by Sonia Marmeladova – the



Fragments from the manuscript of the novel *Crime and Punishment*

Dostoevsky's manuscripts can not only be read in the literal sense, but also *viewed*. Various sketches can be found on the pages of the writer's rough drafts. These are more or less painstakingly drawn human figures and faces, each connected in some way with the images of characters from his books, or with concrete people he had on his mind at the time. There are also illustrations of architectural details and Gothic windows. The drawings in Dostoevsky's manuscripts provide food for thought about his fictional world.

meek and quiet Sonia, whose love, sacrifice, and faith help Raskolnikov to overcome the delusion of his "idea." However, this does not come about immediately.

Raskolnikov, who comes to see Sonia after the murder, asks her to read him the Gospel passage of Lazarus' resurrection: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live..." On the previous day, in answer to Porfiry Petrovich's question of whether he believed in the resurrection of Lazarus, Raskolnikov had answered uncertainly, "I be–believe..." Having seen the Gospels in Sonia's room (a volume looking like the copy that had been given to Dostoevsky in Tobolsk by the Decembrists' wives — "The book was old and worn, with a leather binding"), Raskolnikov asks her to read to him precisely "about the resurrection of Lazarus." The scene is symbolic: Raskolnikov, like Lazarus, is spiritually dead and is instinctively seeking salvation. He attempts to convince himself that Sonia, who became a prostitute for the sake of her destitute family, is the same kind of criminal as he is, allegedly because she has also "broken" a moral law. Raskolnikov's sister Dunia, in agreeing to marry Luzhin for the sake of her brother, was preparing to make a similar sacrifice. Raskolnikov equates their personal sacrifices with his own

F.M. Dostoevsky. Photograph by M.B. Tulinov, 1861

violation of another's life. The murder, which had been planned out with theoretical precision, does not hold up in practice; things begin to go wrong almost immediately: Raskolnikov has to kill Liza, the pawnbroker's meek sister, who unexpectedly returns to the apartment at the very moment of the crime. Thus, according to Dostoevsky, one crime begets another. The only result of violence is moral destruction.

At the end of the novel, however, when Raskolnikov is already in prison, he suddenly understands, not abstractly but with all the warmth of human emotion, what Sonia has meant in his life. "Love resurrected them," writes the author, "the heart of one contained an endless source of life for the heart of the other." "But this is the beginning of another story, a story of the gradual renewal of a human being..."

B. Kostygov. The House of I.M.Alonkin, where Dostoevsky lived in 1864–1867. Here he wrote *The Gambler* and *Crime and Punishment*. 1993

THE GAMBLER AND MARRIAGE TO ANNA SNITKINA

Fiscal circumstances forced Dostoevsky to begin his new novel, *The Gambler*, even before he was able to complete *Crime and Punishment*. The subject of this new work was something he knew only too well. On several occasions during the preceding years he had spent time in Germany, where he had unexpectedly become taken with the game of roulette. This passion tormented him for nine years. Gambling was a trial that he could not overcome: "And the worst thing is that my nature is base and too passionate, for everywhere and in everything I go to the farthest limit; all my life I have gone beyond the boundaries..."

All his life Dostoevsky longed to tempt fate and to experience the sensations of a man standing on the brink of a precipice: "My hands trembled, my thoughts were gone, and, even while losing, I was almost somehow glad, and said: it's all right, it's all right..." He would become passionately involved in the game, powerless to stop while he could still find even one *louis d'or* in his pocket, and would usually lose everything to the very last. Yet, throughout the entire game, Dostoevsky remained a writer and researcher. He observed the psychology of gamblers and tried to come up with some theory of gambling, so as to create his own system, and to comprehend the logic of the gambler's behavior. He dedicated his novel *The Gambler* "to the clearest and most detailed depiction of the game of roulette," and the novel's main character, like many of the writer's protagonists, is possessed by an idea that becomes a passion. For him

Wiesbaden. Kurhaus. Lithograph, middle of 19th cent.

Wiesbaden. Garden. "I paced around the garden for about an hour, all atremble; finally I went to the roulette table and lost everything. My hands were shaking; my thoughts confused. And even when losing, I was somehow almost glad; I kept saying, "Let it be, let it be." Finally, after losing everything (and at that moment that didn't even strike me), I walked in the park for a couple of hours; God knows where I wandered off to; /.../ I have to admit that the place here is charming. The park is marvelous; so is the gambling hall. The music is splendid, better than in Dresden. It would be nice to stay a while here if it weren't for the damned roulette."

(Dostoevsky. *From the letters*)

Appolon Aleksandrovitch Grigoriev (1822–1864), poet, critic, and theoretician of *pochvennichestvo* (a call for a return to cultural roots – the term deriving from *pochva*, the Russian for "the native soil"). The views of Grigoriev and Dostoevsky concurred on many issues. They met in 1860. Dostoevsky constantly got Grigoriev out of difficult circumstances and was one of the few people to attend his funeral. Grigoriev's sudden death in 1864 dealt Dostoevsky a heavy blow.

Appolon Aleksandrovitch Grigoriev. Photograph, early 1860s

A.G. Dostoevskaya.
Photograph by Lushev. 1860s

F.M.Dostoevsky.
Photograph by I.A.Goch. Early 1860s

Anna Grigorievna Snitkina (1846–1918), the writer's second wife.

In 1866, according to the bondage-like contract with the publisher F.T.Stellowsky, F.M.Dostoevsky was obliged to submit a new novel before November 1. His work on *Crime and Punishment* had taken longer than planned, so the writer was forced to pause working on it in order to write up a whole new novel in an incredibly short time span, to fulfill his contract obligations. His friends suggested he employ a stenographer, for the purpose of speeding up his work. Accordingly, A.G.Snitkina came to the writer as his employee, on October 4, 1866.

While closely working together for a whole time 26 days, they began to feel deep affection for each other. *The Gambler* was finished on October 30. On November 8, 1866, the writer proposed to Anna Grigorievna, and she gladly accepted.

gambling is one of the varieties of an "accursed idea," an obsession: "...all his vital energies, strengths, unruliness, and daring went into roulette. He is a gambler, and not a simple gambler, just as Pushkin's 'covetous knight' was no simple miser... In his own way he is a poet, only he himself is ashamed of this poetry, for he profoundly senses its baseness, although the exigencies of risk ennoble it in his own eyes..."

The Gambler is connected with an important turning point in Dostoevsky's personal life. In 1864 he had lost three loved ones: his wife Maria, his older brother Mikhail, and his close friend Apollon Grigoriev, the famous critic, poet, and contributor to the journals *Time* and *The Epoch*, all

died. "My life has been broken in two," Dostoevsky wrote. Aside from the loneliness which he now experienced, enormous debts left after his brother's death fell upon him. Dostoevsky assumed responsibility for all of Mikhail's debts. He would indeed end up paying off this sum almost up until his last days. Now he was forced to write on commission: he would receive advance money from his publishers, and then send in parts of his novels to be published in installments. He often signed contracts hastily, and thus would sometimes wind up in difficult situations. On this particular occasion, in 1864–1865, he needed to produce a novel in the space of a month, which seemed a simply impossible task. According to the terms of this crafty agreement, were he to fail, Dostoevsky would lose all rights and royalties to his future works. Friends advised him to hire a stenographer.

N.Alekseev.
Illustration for the novel *The Gambler*. 1929

So, on October 4, 1866, Anna Snitkina came to his home for the first time. With her help, Dostoevsky wrote *The Gambler* in twenty six days. When the work was completed he proposed to her. On February 15, 1867, they were married in the Trinity-Izmailovsky Cathedral. "My stenographer, Anna Grigorievna Snitkina, was a young and fairly attractive woman, twenty years old, of a good family; she had finished her courses with honors, and she had an extraordinarily kind and serene character. Our work started off excellently [...] by the end of the novel I could tell that my stenographer loved me sincerely, although she had never spoken a word to me about it, and I was liking her more and more. As it had been terribly lonely and difficult for me after the death of my brother, I asked her to marry me. She agreed, and now here we are, married. There's an awful difference in age (20 and 44), but I am becoming more and more convinced that she will be happy. She has a heart, and she knows how to love," – Dostoevsky wrote to A. Suslova in his letter, dated April 23, 1867.

Florence, Guiccardini Street (on Piazza Pitti).
The house where Dostoevsky lived in 1868–1869 and worked on his novel *The Idiot*.
The house is marked with a memorial plaque

THE IDIOT

Soon after the wedding, in April of 1867, Dostoevsky and his wife went abroad. During that spring and summer, they stayed in Berlin, Dresden, Hamburg, and Baden-Baden, and later, Switzerland and Italy. Anna's diary from 1867 illustrates rather clearly all the circumstances of the first period of their life together. The writer's young wife had to bear a number of hardships: acute material need, frequent moves, life in hotels, the sideways glances of their landlords when there was no possibility of paying for a room on time, and her tormenting fear for the health of her husband, who suffered from attacks of epilepsy. She experienced many bitter moments when Dostoevsky would gamble at roulette, sometimes losing all their remaining money. From time to time, letters from Apollinaria Suslova would arrive, an ordeal perhaps most difficult of all, for Anna. All of this, however, was compensated for by a feeling of the couple's growing mutual affection which no ordeals or difficulties could destroy. Realizing that she had bound her life to a man of enormous artistic talent, Anna was prepared to forgive everything and patiently endure all the disorder of their nomadic life.

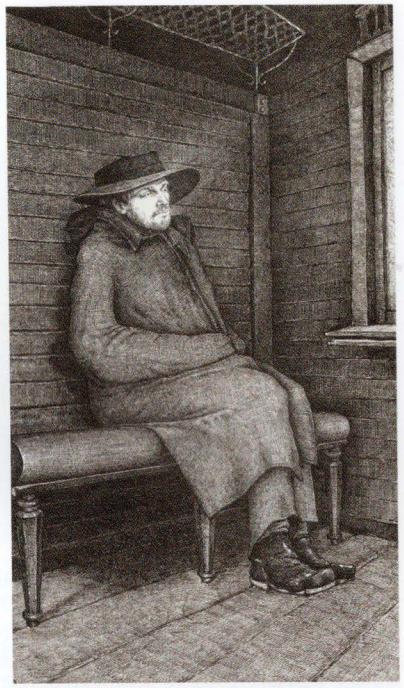
Wherever they happened to be while abroad, they would visit art galleries and concert halls and stroll together in the beautiful gardens of old Europe (Dresden, Geneva, Florence).

In February of 1868, their daughter Sofia was born to the enormous joy of both of her parents. She only lived for three months, however. On the

day of his daughter's death, Dostoevsky wrote a letter to A.N. Maikov: "My Sonia has died. [...] I didn't know she would die until two hours before her death." Anna reminisced, "I never saw such wild despair. We both thought we wouldn't live through our grief."

These events, of 1867–68, served as the background to Dostoevsky's intense creative work on *The Idiot*.

In a letter to his favorite niece, Sofia Ivanova, dated January 1, 1868, Dostoevsky wrote about the novel's central concept: "The idea of the novel is an old favorite of mine, but it's so difficult that for a long time I wasn't brave enough to take it on. [...] The main idea of the novel is to depict a positively beautiful person. There's nothing harder than this in the world, and especially now. All writers, not only our own, but all European writers who have ever dealt with depicting



Prince Myshkin (Innokenty Smoktunovsky in the role of Myshkin).
Drawing by A.Garichev. 1960s

Russian actor Innokenty Smoktunovsky created one of the best theatre images of Prince Myshkin (in *The Idiot*, staged by the Bolshoi Drama Theatre in Leningrad, in 1957). "I had had the intention to stage *The Idiot* for a long time even long before I came to the Bolshoi Drama Theatre. Naturally, in my imagination there lived my own Myshkin. He figured firmly in my plans for the role. But he was not a real person yet. But when I first met the actor Smoktunovsky, whom I had never known before, I immediately recognized those familiar eyes. My Myshkin had the same open eyes with pure look piercing one right through to your soul."
(G.Tovstonogov, the Bolshoi Drama Theatre director)

the positively beautiful have never been able to cope with it. Because it's a limitless task. The beautiful is an ideal, one which neither we nor the civilized Europe have perfected. There is only one positively beautiful person in the world – Christ, so the appearance of this boundlessly, immeasurably, endlessly beautiful person is certainly an endless miracle. [...] I will just mention that of the beautiful figures of Christian literature, Don Quixote is the most perfect. But he is beautiful only because he is ridiculous at the same time. Dickens' Pickwick [...] is also ridiculous, and this is the only way he

Switzerland. Vevey. Postcard, second half of 19th cent.

succeeds. Compassion arises toward beauty which is ridiculed and ignorant of its worth – so, it stands to reason, the reader is sympathetic. This compassion is the secret of humor. Jean Valjean is also a strong attempt, but he arouses sympathy through his awful unhappiness and the unfairness of society towards him. What I have is nothing like that, nothing at all, and for that reason I'm awfully frightened that it will be an absolute failure. Some details, maybe, will be all right. I'm scared that it will be boring. It's a long novel. I wrote the whole first part in twenty three days, and sent it off a few days ago. [...] The second part, which I'm sitting down to today, will be finished in a month (I've worked like this my whole life, after all). [...] Wish me, dear friend, at least a little luck! The novel is called *The Idiot*, and is dedicated to you, that is, to Sofia Alexandrovna Ivanova."

The main character of the novel, Prince Myshkin, is created as the embodiment of the best and most noble human qualities. He is Don Quixote, the "Poor Knight," as Aglaya Epanchina hints, when she reads the Pushkin poem of the same name in a particularly meaningful tone in the prince's presence. The features of ideal literary heroes shine through this image, just as the author has planned. Myshkin, however, is not an intellectualized literary figure, but the living, unique, and tragic portrait of a human being who is too good for this world of passion, greed, and egotism. He had spent many years in a clinic in Switzerland, since he suffered from a serious illness and, as he says of himself, "I was almost an idiot." The word *idiot*, however,

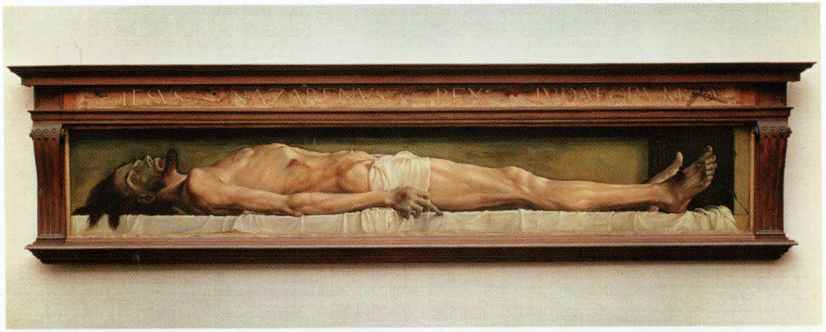
Pages from the manuscripts of *The Idiot*

aside from its clinical or derogatory sense, has another, hidden meaning: blessed, the simple-minded "fool of Christ" who is unlike the rest.

The novel is full of various kinds of hints at the correspondence between the image of Prince Myshkin and the "unsurpassingly beautiful image" of Jesus Christ, who is the evangelic prototype of Myshkin.

Dostoevsky's working notebooks mention a plan "to write a book about Jesus Christ." In regard to this, S.N. Bulgakov wrote: "We don't know if he would have written this book, but in an obvious sense, all of his books, especially those of recent years, are written about Christ; in everything He is the true center, even if invisible, sometimes coming out plainly." In *The Idiot*, this presence of Christ can be constantly felt. It is in the personality of the main protagonist, who, devoid of all egotism and pride, is endowed with the capacity to understand and forgive everything and everyone, and who lives outside of the social and professional hierarchy – above the mundane world.

Prince Myshkin seems to be deprived of a natural sense of self-preservation. Upon turning up in Petersburg, he finds himself in the very center of a set of muddled relationships and fateful passions. He senses that he is not up to this burden, yet cannot abandon the deeply unhappy Nastasya Filippovna, or his "brother by the cross" and rival Parfyon Rogozhin, or Aglaya, or Ippolit – anyone with whom his fate has now become so unexpectedly entwined. Prince Myshkin is constantly chased by presentiments of unhappiness, violent death, and catastrophe. He senses the hateful gaze of Rogozhin upon him, and then sees a knife raised above him in a dark stairwell. It is with this knife that Rogozhin stabs Nastasya



Hans Holbein the Younger, *Dead Christ*. 1521–1522.
Photograph from the painting

Filippovna at the end of the novel. By that time, Myshkin consumed with his previous illness, is once again isolated from the world, having paid this high price for the sins, catastrophes, and crimes of other people whose fate he had been ready to share without thinking of himself.

Death, the demise of beauty, and the indifference of nature, which mercilessly subjects absolutely everything to destruction, are the dominant themes in the novel. Prince Myshkin's speech about the death penalty at the beginning of the novel, the confession of the youth Ippolit, who is doomed to soon die of consumption, and Nastasya Filippovna's mysterious foreknowledge of her own terrible end – all these elements create a dense atmosphere of desperation.

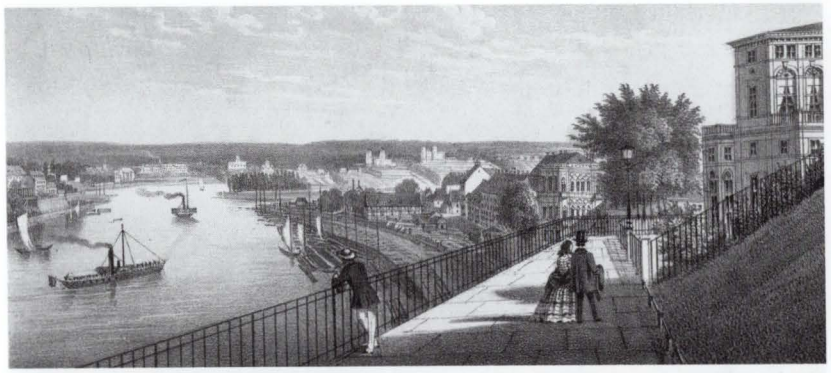
The theme of death in the novel, however, is inseparable from the themes of Resurrection and immortality, especially clearly expressed in the struggle between the images of the dead and living Christ. In Rogozhin's house, there hangs a copy of Hans Holbein the Younger's painting *Christ in the Tomb*, a depiction of Christ at the moment when he was taken down from the cross. This painting had especially impressed Dostoevsky when he was visiting the gallery in Basel. According to Anna's memoirs, for a long time he couldn't step away from it, and was shaken by the tragic image of the dead Christ, depicted with all the visible marks of the physical suffering He had endured, and of His body's posthumous decay. In the novel, it is this very painting which moves Prince Myshkin, Rogozhin, and Ippolit Terentiev to ponder the meaning of life, faith, and immortality. In his confession, Ippolit asks how the disciples, apostles, and women who were standing by the cross and saw the corpse could believe in Resurrection. "Here one can't help but think that if death is that awful and the forces of nature are that powerful, how can they be overcome?"

The action of *The Idiot* takes place in Petersburg during the 1860s. This was a time of polarization in social consciousness aroused by new ideas fermenting. "Chaos and disorder" are the words Lizaveta Prokofievna uses

Feinberg. *At Nastasia Philippovna's*.
From the series of illustrations for the novel *The Idiot*. 1947

to define the moral condition of the young generation. "They are vain! They don't believe in God, they don't believe in Christ! ...It will end with you all devouring each other, this I predict for you," she says, addressing the young people who had libeled the Prince.

The problems of the young generation, its moral and mental state in an epoch which had lost all "firm ground" and ties with tradition – these are also thematic centers in *The Idiot*. Through the words of the character Lebedev, who likes to interpret the Book of Revelation, Dostoevsky defines modernity as "an age of prophets and railroads." Lebedev views the network of railroads covering the map of Europe as something like "the Wormwood star," which according to Revelation, will fall to earth at the end of time and turn bitter the fountain of waters. Of course, it is not the railroads themselves which displease Dostoevsky, who hides here behind the mask of his eccentric character. They here symbolize a pragmatic, non-spiritual civilization. The thought that "humanity is becoming too noisy and industrial; there is little spiritual peace," disturbs the writer. Prince Myshkin, who is humble, weak, and marked by illness, does not save anyone. However, he brings people the light of higher truth and beauty, without which the world is doomed to annihilation and death.



Dresden.View onto the Elbe River from Brühl's Terrace.
Engraving, second half of 19thcent.

DEMONS

Dostoevsky believed that his conception of *The Idiot* had not been completely or adequately realized; indeed, the reading public received the novel coolly. "I sense," he wrote to N. Strakhov, "that, compared to *Crime and Punishment*, the effect of *The Idiot* upon readers was weaker. Therefore my ambitions have been stirred: I want to reproduce that effect." He was once again seized by the urge to write the kind of work in which he could embody his cherished ideas in artistic form.

In August 1869, the Dostoevskys moved from Florence to Dresden, where they would live for almost two years before returning to Russia in July of 1871. Here their daughter Liubov was born on September 14. Meanwhile, their material circumstances remained very difficult. Dostoevsky worried about how they would survive now, with a small daughter on their hands. Besides his artistic plans, his financial difficulties also propelled him into an intense period of work.

At this time, he started thinking about a large novel, *The Life of a Great Sinner*. Dostoevsky wrote about this in a letter of March 25, 1870 to A. Maikov: "This novel will consist of five long stories. [...] The main question which will make its way through all the parts is the same one that I have grappled with my whole life, consciously and unconsciously – the existence of God. The main character, throughout the course of his life, goes from being an atheist, to a believer, then a fanatic and sectarian, then an atheist again. The whole second part will take place in a monastery. I've put all my hopes in this second part. Maybe they'll finally say that I haven't been writing trifling things all this time." This conception, to which Dostoevsky attached

such great hope, remained unrealized, but it contained the preliminary outlines of the figures and situations which were developed in his next large works – *Demons**, *The Adolescent*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*.

The project of *The Life of a Great Sinner* was interrupted by *Demons*, a novel which Dostoevsky began to write as an intensely contemporary work, directly connected with the events of the Nechaev Affair. During all the years that he lived far from Russia, Dostoevsky had worried that he would lose his connection to his homeland, and that he would fall away from the "living stream of life." He constantly read Russian newspapers and, while he was living in the West, focused his thoughts and heart on what was happening in Russia.

A.G. Dostoevskaya.
Photograph by K. Arazim. Dresden. 1870

In November 1869, a crime was committed in Moscow and was reported in all the Russian newspapers: a student of the Petrovskaia Agricultural Academy, I. Ivanov, had been killed by a group of revolutionary conspirators headed by Sergei Nechaev. The crime had been committed in the deserted reaches of the Academy Park, in a shallow cave, and the body had been thrown into a pond. Soon the participants in the murder were arrested, while Nechaev fled abroad. It was discovered that the student Ivanov, who had been a member of this secret revolutionary circle, had decided to leave the group because he had changed his views. Nechaev persuaded the other members of the circle of the need to kill Ivanov in order to protect the group from his denunciation. Secretly, however his aim was to gain definitive control over all of the members, to "bind them by blood." Dostoevsky followed the trial proceedings intently. He carefully read *The Catechism of A Revolutionary*, written by Nechaev jointly with A.Bakunin, in which the latter formulated his secret organization's principles of revolutionary activity. According to Nechaev, the revolutionary should have no family, no friends, no Fatherland. His whole being should be sacrificed to the greater cause of rebellion and revolution. Such an end justifies any means, even criminal ones. It was this awful ideology that had led Nechaev and his comrades to murder.

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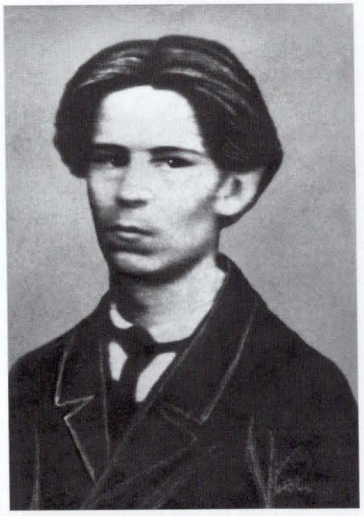
* This novel also appears in English translation under the title *The Possessed* and *The Devils*.

N.A. Speshnev.
From an engraving. Early 1840s



S. G. Nechaev.
Photograph.About 1865

Nikolai Aleksandrovich Speshnev (18210–1882). The most politically radical member of the Petrashevsky circle, he stood out in the group for his unusual and charismatic personality traits. Dostoevsky's acquaintance with Speshev was reflected in his work, especially in the novels *Demons* (as Stavrogin) and *The Adolescent* (in the character of Versilov).

Sergei Gennadievich Nechaev (1847–1882). Revolutionary-fanatic, head of "The People's Retribution," a secret organization which operated on the principle of individual terror. The protocols of the Nechaev affair, especially the prosecution materials in trial against this organization's members, played an important role in the conception and writing of the novel *Demons*.

Dostoevsky saw this crime as symptomatic of a cruel social illness with unpredictable and destructive consequences. He decided to write a work in which he would show just how dangerous this denial of religion, morals, family, and human bonds was. Thus the idea for *Demons* was born. In a letter to N.Strakhov dated March 24, 1870 on the subject of his new novel, Dostoevsky wrote, "I have great hopes for the work I'm writing now for the *Russian Messenger*, not from an artistic, but rather from a polemical point of view. I want to have my say about a few ideas, even if the artistic side of the work is killed by it. Yet I'm taken by what has built up in my mind and heart; even if only a pamphlet comes out of it, still I'll have my say. I hope I'll succeed."

Demons depicts a small circle of conspirators whose actions are controlled by the head "Nihilist", Peter Verkhovensky, a cynic provocateur, a man who exists outside of ethics and morals. He organizes the murder of

Shatov, who, like the student Ivanov, has decided to break with the circle. Instead, Shatov has acquired other values, new and different: he now believes in a special mission of Russia and the Russian people. Afterwards Dostoevsky would write that he had known neither Nechaev nor the other conspirators personally. His Verkhovensky is not the portrait of a real man but rather an artistic image evoked in order to generalize the phenomenon which the author saw in the "Nechaev Syndrome." The Nihilists in the novel are a pitiful handful of "demons," or rather, playthings of real demons, causing disturbances that bring suffering and death to people who sometimes don't even know of their existence.

Dostoevsky also shows the origins of this phenomenon. It comes from faithlessness and false, foreign ideas, accepted by

I.S. Turgenev.
Photograph by Bergamasco. 1874

Dostoevsky met Turgenev in 1845, in the circle of Belinsky. Their initial friendship rapidly cooled. Despite a brief rapprochement in the early 1860's, their ideological differences only intensified: after he completed his sentence in Siberia, Dostoevsky came back an Orthodox believer and a monarchist, while Turgenev, by his own admission, was "a radical and incorrigible *zapadnik* (Westernist) <...> who considered the *slavophile* doctrine to be false and futile" (I.S.Turgenev. *Apropos of Fathers and Sons*). Contemporaries – included – easily recognized Turgenev's satirical depiction by Dostoevsky in *Demons*, as the writer Karmazinov.

immature minds (the Nihilists read the philosophical works of the "vulgar" German materialists, including Büchner and Moleschott. One of the young men even builds a lectern, places these books on it, and prays to them as if to new gods).

In the process of its creation, *Demons* far outgrew the bounds of a polemical work dealing with a "burning issue of the day." Dostoevsky did not only depict the conspirator Nihilists themselves, but he also showed that their appearance was no accident, that they were the sons of their fathers,

Pages from the manuscripts of the novel *Demons*

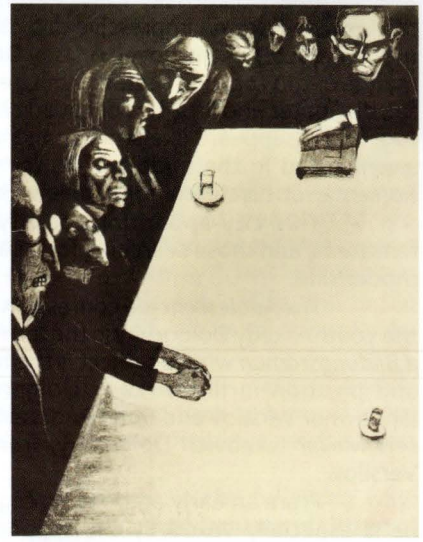
the noble-souled idealists of the 1840s. In the novel, Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky belongs to this, elder generation – he is the father of Peter Verkhovensky and the teacher of Nikolai Stavrogin. The prototype of Stephan Verkhovensky was the famous activist of the 1840s, the historian and Moscow University professor T. Granovsky. Dostoevsky studied the history of intellectual culture of that age. The names of Granovsky and Chaadaev appear in plans for his novel *The Life of a Great Sinner*, and in *Demons* Dostoevsky created the portrait of a man belonging to that generation. Stepan Trofimovich is a liberal Westernizer, a naïve man helpless in everyday, practical matters. The abstract and seemingly innocent free-thinking of Verkhovensky Senior, however, has transformed into rude nihilism, political adventurist scheming, and total dissolution of morality, in the personality of his son. The father does not recognize himself in his son, or his son as his just nemesis for his lack of responsibility, but that is what his son is.

The central character and main protagonist of the novel is Nikolai Stavrogin. He is good-looking, an aristocrat, and, socially, a nobleman; all of the characters in the novel are involuntarily drawn to him, all the women are in love with him, and everyone suspects some kind of secret in his biography. Stavrogin's main secret is not, however, his marriage to the poverty-stricken cripple, Maria Timofeevna Lebyadkina, and not even his rape of the little girl Matryosha — a crime he recounts in his confession to the monk Tikhon. Stavrogin's secret is his deep inner ruin and faithlessness, which lead him to suicide at the end of the novel. Stavrogin's personality, simultaneously charming and repulsive, also has a partial prototype – Nikolai Speshnev, a member of the Petrashevsky circle, who at one time had strongly influenced Dostoevsky.

Dostoevsky meant to connect the title of the novel, *Demons*, with Pushkin's poem of the same name, an excerpt from which he placed at the beginning of the novel as an epigraph:

> "What to do? The road's not clear now,
> Gone astray without a guide!
> Demons drive us into fields now,
> Whirling round on every side."

This picture of a murky whirlwind in a mirage-like snowstorm resonates throughout the novel. Dostoevsky foretold the awful, destructive consequences which the "Nechaev Syndrome," with its corresponding "Shigalevism," would bring: instead of equality, slavery, instead of freedom, the barracks, and instead of brotherhood, universal fear, hatred, and denunciations, binding everyone together. This "bedevilment," however, does not express itself only in the sphere of political radicalism. In *Demons*, the reader becomes involved in the unstable atmosphere of a universal state of vanity, pride, loss of firm moral guideposts, and lack of faith. This is just the kind of atmosphere in which criminal ideas crystallize without meeting any kind of social resistance. The novel takes on the scope and features of a genuine tragedy. Like Shakespeare's *Royal Chronicles*, it concludes with the death of the majority of the main characters: Stavrogin, Shatov, Kirillov, the Lebyadkins, and Liza. Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky also dies, experiencing profound spiritual insight before his death. His last words are addressed to Russia, which he compares to a sick man possessed by demons: "It's us, us, and those people, and Petrusha ... *et les autres avec lui*, and I, perhaps, am the first, in the lead; and we will throw ourselves, insane and possessed, from the cliff into the sea and we will all drown, and our road lies in that direction because that's the only thing that we will be sufficient for. But the sick man will be healed and 'will sit at Christ's feet ... and everyone will look on with amazement'..."



V. Pivovarov. *At Ours'*. From the series of illustrations for the novel *Demons*. 1969

Thus the parable from the Gospels about the healing of the possessed man, which is placed as an epigraph to the novel, takes on full significance in its final pages.

Bad-Ems. Photograph. Second half of 19th cent.

THE ADOLESCENT

Dostoevsky wrote his next novel, *The Adolescent**, in 1874–75. It was first published in N.Nekrasov's journal *Notes from the Fatherland* (1875).

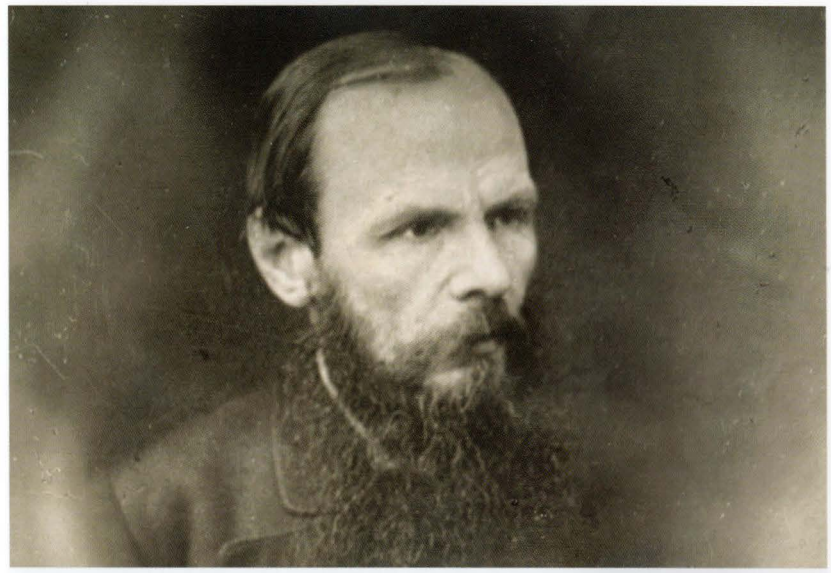
It is Dostoevsky's last Petersburg novel. Here, once again, the reader witnesses an impressive depiction of a strange, "fantastic" city. The main character of the novel, Arkady Dolgoruky, has more than once "in the middle of this fog, had a strange but persistent fancy: 'And what if, when the fog dissipates and lifts, this decayed and slimy city lifts with it, rises with the fog, and disappears like smoke, and what remains is the original Finnish swamp, and in the middle of it, for the sake of decoration, the bronze horseman on his steaming, exhausted horse?'"

This city-apparition, or city-myth, is inhabited by dreamers, fantasists, and those searching for a path within the "chaos and disorder" of modern life.

The Adolescent is a confession. It is written from the point of view of the youth Arkady Dolgoruky in the form of his "Notes." In terms of genre, it is a *Bildungsroman* whose subject is the formation of a young man's character and position in life. Arkady Dolgoruky is the illegitimate son of the landowner Versilov and Sofia Andreevna, who is the wife of the household serf Makar Ivanovich Dolgoruky, from whom she separated because of Versilov.

From an early age, the ambiguity of his position has ailed Arkady; he is especially vexed by the supposedly aristocratic name, Dolgoruky, which has been given to him. He has complex and contradictory feelings for

* This novel also appears in English translation under the title *A Raw Youth*.



F.M. Dostoevsky. Photograph by N. Lorenkovich. 1878

his father, both delighting in him and hating him, at times. Because of this tormenting complex of emotions and distress, he decides to "radically break with everyone" and "go for my own idea" – "to become a Rothschild." Like the Baron from Pushkin's *The Covetous Knight*, he strives for wealth, not for the sake of pleasure and luxury, but in order to secretly attain a sense of might, superiority, and of his power over people. However, real life, his natural need for people, and his desire to love and be loved, constantly force Arkady to steer away from his projected goal.

Arkady is depicted by Dostoevsky as a young man of his time, when a sense of disjunction and loss of firm foundations permeated life everywhere. "Deterioration is the dominant idea of the novel," Dostoevsky wrote. Arkady is the child of "an accidental family." Unlike Tolstoy's characters, who are strongly tied to a stable noble way of life, and to the "soil," Arkady is able to depend only on himself, although inwardly he searches for support.

Arkady cannot help being drawn toward his father, Andrei Petrovich Versilov. He sees in his father everything that he himself lacks: good looks, self-confidence, control over his surroundings, and a quiet dignity.

Versilov describes his own inner essence in the following way: "*gentilhomme russe et citoyen du monde*" (a Russian nobleman and citizen of the world). Versilov is a Russian European in the manner of the noble intelligentsia of the 1830s and 40s. In creating this figure, Dostoevsky borrowed from the model of Herzen, a famous Russian writer, journalist, and

M.Royter. *Arkady and Akhmakova*. From the series of illustrations for the novel *The Adolescent*. 1947

revolutionary, living in emigration, who most vividly embodied the type of the "*Russian wanderer*." There is a noticeable similarity between Versilov and Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky of *Demons*, particularly in their attitude toward Europe and European culture. In one of his conversations with Arkady, Versilov dramatically ponders the deep ties between the educated Russian citizen and European culture: "Europe is as precious for the Russian as Russia is: its every stone is sweet and dear. Europe was as much our fatherland as Russia. Oh, even more so! It is impossible to love Russia more than I do, but I have never reproached myself for the fact that Venice, Rome, Paris, the treasures of their science and art, all their history – are dearer to me than Russia. Oh, those old, foreign stones, those wonders of God's ancient world, those shards of holy miracles are dear to Russians; even more dear to us than to Europeans themselves!"

Versilov is a complex and many-sided figure. In many ways he is reminiscent of Nikolai Stavrogin: there is a certain demonic attraction and aestheticism in him that inevitably affects everyone, especially women. He is similarly marked by a tragic emptiness; all his passionate moments, both spiritual and romantic, already belong to his past, and remain mysterious to those surrounding him. Yet Versilov is older than Stavrogin, he has passed the "Stavrogin" stage of life, and, moreover, he belongs to a different generation. This character has been endowed both with a certain demonism and God-defying strength (in the throes of some fit he smashes Makar Dolgoruky's ancient icon), and with profound sincerity and a capability for elevated reflection. Versilov ponders the "Golden Age" of humanity, in regard to Claude Lorrain's painting *Acis and Galatea*, one of Dostoevsky's favorite Dresden paintings. Through the words of Versilov, the author himself speaks here, "his words deeply permeated thought" – on one of his own dearest subjects: "I had a dream which I had not expected at all, because I'd never had a dream like this before. In Dresden, in the art gallery, there is a painting by Claude Lorrain, according to the catalog – *Acis and Galatea*;

Claude Lorrain. *Acis and Galatea*. 1657. Reproduction

I myself always called it *The Golden Age*, I don't know why. [...] It was this painting that appeared in my dream, but not as a painting – rather like some kind of a real event. [...] Exactly as in the painting, I saw a little corner of the Greek Archipelago, and it was as if time had leaped back three thousand years; the blue, caressing waves, the islands and rock faces, the shoreline all blooming, the magical panorama in the distance, the inviting setting sun – none of it can be described in words. European mankind can trace the memory of its cradle to this place. I too was overcome with this thought, as if loving the place as its native. Here was an earthly paradise for humanity: gods descended from the heavens and mingled with people... Oh, beautiful people lived there! [...] A wonderful dream, the great error of mankind! The Golden Age is the most unbelievable dream of all there have been, but people have given their entire lives and all their strength for it; prophets have died and been killed for it, and without it, people don't want to live yet can't even die! [...]"

This vision of a "Golden Age" stood in sharp contrast to the threatening and disastrous current events of 1870 and 1871: the Franco-Prussian War, the Paris Commune, and the fire which destroyed the royal palace at Tuilleries. Versilov, the "Russian European," interprets all these things as symbolic events resounding as a bell tolling for old Europe. Dostoevsky, like his character Versilov, grieved over the approach of an ordinary bourgeois way of life and the "muddying" of beauty in this modern society. In Versilov's study, where the protagonist often sits alone for long

Pages from manuscripts of the novel *The Adolescent*

periods of time, there hangs a "superior large engraving of the Dresden Madonna" and "an enormous, valuable photograph of the cast bronze gates at the Florence Cathedral" – works of art which Dostoevsky himself especially loved.

Versilov's spiritual wanderings are marked by two poles: Europe and Russia. He runs to the West, thus betraying his wife Sofia, but in the end, after all the commotion, returns to her forever, thereby fulfilling the admonition of the wanderer and pilgrim Makar, Sofia's (Sophia's!) saintly and selfsacrificing legal husband. This homecoming, certainly, has a symbolic meaning: the refined Westernizer, skeptic, and spiritual emigrant gains a homeland and finds peace at the side of a quiet, meek, and simple woman, his true friend. Just like *Sonia* (a form of the name Sofia) Marmeladova from *Crime and Punishment* and Sofia Matveevna from *Demons*, who was at Stepan Trofimovich's side during his last journey, Arkady's mother is named Sofia, Sophia, meaning Wisdom in Greek. This is the name borne by those of Dostoevsky's heroines who are filled with faith, love, and humility.

In *The Adolescent*, Dostoevsky for the first time brings to the fore the image of the "folk pilgrim" Makar Ivanovich Dolgoruky, the embodiment of positive religious experience. Dostoevsky knew the tradition of Russian pilgrimage well. *An Account of the Pilgrimage and Travels of the Monk Parfeny in Russia, Moldavia, Turkey, and the Holy Land* (1856), was a book that much influenced Dostoevsky as he created the character of Makar Dolgoruky. The writer had this book in his library. In his letters and notebooks, Dostoevsky mentioned a monk, named Parfeny/ Parthenios (meaning *virginal*, like the name of Rogozhin also). Makar Dolgoruky resembles this Parfeny/ Parthenios in his simplicity, sincerity, wisdom, and

M.Royter. *Arkady after the scandal at the gambling house.* 1949

clarity of mind. The foundation for these qualities is a natural and organic connection to folk religion and ideas of morality. Makar Dolgoruky is endowed with a "cheerfulness of heart" and a reverent beauty in his countenance (*благообразие*, an epithet which, liturgically, is used to describe the Noble Joseph of Arimathea, Christ's secret disciple who took Him off the Cross) – features most people lack, overcome as they are with passions, greed, and inner unrest. Makar has a special influence on all the main characters of the novel, the members of the dysfunctional Versilov family. He passes away, but, like the Elder Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov*, he leaves behind a profound spiritual imprint. In large part thanks to Makar, the adolescent Arkady emerges from his tumultuous uncertainties stronger and more mature. At the end of the novel, the author leaves his character on the threshold of a new life. He says of Arkady's "Notes" that they "could serve as material for a future work of fiction, for the future depiction of a disordered but already past epoch," when "the future artist will seek out beautiful forms even for the depiction of past disorder and chaos."The novel *The Adolescent* itself is certainly such a work.

B.Kostygov. *Dostoevsky's house by the Greek Church* (The House of A.P. Strubinsky). 1993

THE DIARY OF A WRITER (1873–1874, 1876–1877, 1880–1881)

In July of 1871, the Dostoevskys returned to Russia. Soon thereafter their son Fyodor was born, on July 16. Finding a means of support for the family became one of the writer's first concerns. This was probably the deciding factor for his acceptance of Prince V. Meshchersky's offer to become the editor of his new weekly *The Citizen*. Prince Meshchersky held extremely conservative views; he had influence in court and in the administrative circles, and he also authored some now-forgotten high society novels. Dostoevsky's association with *The Citizen* continued through 1873 and the beginning of 1874. He soon realized that he had committed himself to a state of indentured servitude: working for *The Citizen* was exhausting and left no time for his artistic efforts. In April 1874, Dostoevsky abandoned the editorial post that had brought him so much trouble and distress.

However, this less-than-happy episode in the writer's life produced a unique creative result. His *Diary of a Writer*, a series of editorial columns, appeared on the pages of *The Citizen*. Later, *The Diary* would become

The house on the corner of the Greek Avenue (Grechesky Prospect) and 5-th Rozdestvenskaya (now 5-th Sovetskaya) Street, where Dostoevsky lived in Apartment 6. He moved to this House of A.P. Strubinsky in September of 1875 and stayed there until the beginning of October 1878. In this house, the novel *The Adolescent* was completed. Here Dostoevsky restarted his work on the *Diary of a Writer*, in 1876.

№ 7 1873 11 Февраля

ГРАЖДАНИНЪ

ГАЗЕТА-ЖУРНАЛЪ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКІЙ И ЛИТЕРАТУРНЫЙ.

ГОДЪ ВТОРОЙ

ОТЪ РЕДАКЦІИ.

Только что поступилъ въ продажу романъ „БѢСЫ" Ѳедора Достоевскаго, въ трехъ частяхъ. Цѣна 3 р. 50 к. Иногородные подписчики „Гражданина", желающіе получить этотъ романъ, адресуются прямо въ редакцію, и за пересылку ничего не платятъ.

Вышло полное собраніе стихотвореній А. Н. Майкова, послѣднее изданіе въ 3 томахъ. Цѣна 4 р. 50 к. за всѣ три тома, безъ пересылки платить особо.

Продается у всѣхъ книгопродавцевъ С.-Петербурга и въ Москвѣ у Соловьева и Глазунова.

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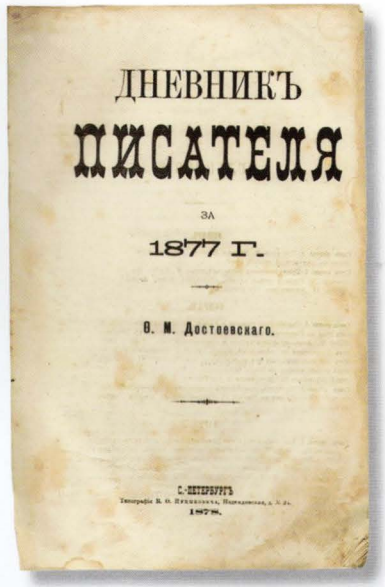
The Citizen (Grazhdanin) weekly journal. № 7, February 11, 1873



ДНЕВНИКЪ ПИСАТЕЛЯ ЗА 1877 Г.

Ѳ. М. Достоевскаго.

С.-ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ

1878.

The Diary of a Writer. St. Petersburg, 1877. Cover

Dostoevsky's full-fledged independent literary journal. In The *Diary of a Writer*, Dostoevsky incorporated articles on literary topics, memoirs, and sketches about his contemporaries, both Russian and European writers (including George Sand, Nekrasov and others), as well as analyzed cases from courtroom news, in his capacity as a journalist and a psychologist it is

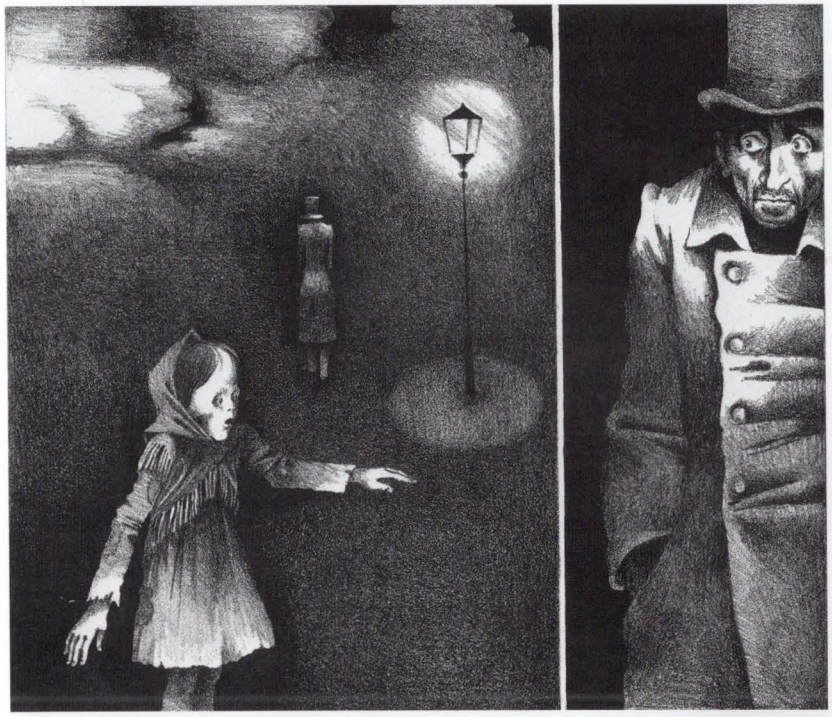
B.Zaborov. From the series of etchings for the novel *The Meek One (Krotkaya)*. 1970

G.Mazurin. Illustration for the short story *The Peasant Marey*. 1974

also there that he pondered current political issues. Dostoevsky wrote much about the national Russian character and the faith of the people (the essay "Vlas"). No matter what topic the author chose, his articles were marked by his distinctly expressed personality. It was a free form of "half-confession, half-diary." The reader could feel that Dostoevsky's thoughts were addressed directly to him, and that he was in a living dialogue with the author.

From the beginning, Dostoevsky incorporated important short stories in *The Diary of a Writer*. These were: "Bobok" (1873), "The Little Boy at Christmas," "The Meek One" (1876), and "Dream of a Ridiculous Man" (1877).

The world of *The Diary of a Writer* is a continuation and development of the same set of ideas, views, images, and problems which saturate Dostoevsky's novels. His fictive and journalistic efforts mutually expand upon and enrich one another. Most subjects touched on *The Diary of a Writer* have something in common with the range of problems shown in his novels – including children's suffering; Russian truth-seeking; states of mind



V.Pivovarov. From the series of illustrations for the short story *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*. 1971

during troubled transition periods; origins of criminal actions, and problems of faith and faithlessness.

In the latest issue of *The Diary of a Writer*, 1877, in his address "To the Readers," Dostoevsky announced that he was suspending its publication, since he intended to devote himself completely to "a literary work that has imperceptibly and involuntarily been taking shape... over the two years of publishing the *Diary*." He had in mind a new novel, which he felt it was high time to complete in writing there and then. It was *The Brothers Karamazov*.

The Optina Monastery. From a chromolithograph by E.I.Fesenko. 1899

THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

The Brothers Karamazov was to be Dostoevsky's last work. He began it in 1878, having planned it as a work of global proportions in which he had decided to incorporate his most important thoughts on the fate of the young generation, and on the past, present, and future of Russia. The novel is Dostoevsky's greatest work as an artist, and its philosophical-religious issues are absolutely unique with respect to both the profundity of the problems posed and the power and energy of their artistic expression. "I have never regarded any of my works as seriously as I do this one," Dostoevsky wrote in one of his letters about *The Brothers Karamazov*.

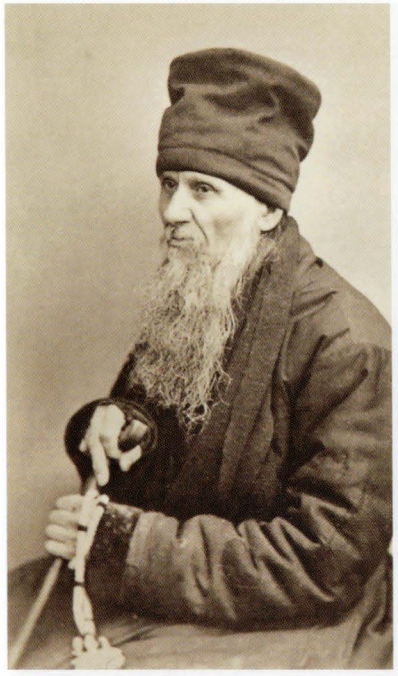
The epigraph to the novel is from the Gospel According to St. John: "Verily, verily I say unto you: Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." This is one of Dostoevsky's favorite Gospel quotes. It demonstrates the great and universal truth of the deep connection between all things in this world: What is small and unnoticed, and, at first glance, arbitrary, can hold great meaning for all humanity.

The Optina Monastery (male), in the Kaluga Diocese, was famous throughout all of Russia in the 19th century, for its holy elders, later canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church. People of all classes and callings, including famous cultural figures, came here to resolve their spiritual problems. In June of 1878, Dostoevsky visited the monastery, timing his trip to coincide with the fortieth day after the death of his son Aleksei. Notes and impressions from this trip informed his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*.

The Dostoevskys' house in Staraya Russa. Photograph. 1880s–1890s

Every summer, beginning in 1872, the Dostoevskys had rented a summer home in this small provincial town. In the summer of 1876, they bought a house in Staraya Russa. Here, Dostoevsky wrote *The Brothers Karamazov*. Many real places of in the town are featured in the novel. In May of 1981, F.M.Dostoevsky's Memorial House and Museum were open in this house.

The action of the novel takes place in a small provincial town with the unattractive name of Skotoprigonevsk ("cattle-driving place"), many of its features based on the description of the actual town of Staraya Russa. Cruel passions unfold in the Karamazov family: based on rivalry for the love of the same woman, overt hatred arises between Fyodor Karamazov and his oldest son Dmitry. A money intrigue is added to the problem, and everything taken together creates a situation fraught with unpredictable and tragic consequences. The theme of patricide appears – this element of the plot, like many in Dostoevsky's oeuvre, comes from his memories of the prison labor camp. It was there that Dostoevsky met the "patricide from the gentry" Dmitry Ilinsky. As it later became clear, Ilinsky was unjustly condemned, and thus became the prototype for Mitya Karamazov. Mitya is haunted by guilt and resolved to assume personal responsibility for things way beyond his control. He is also racked by tormenting passions, unable to control them. However, in contrast to his father, a cynical and wanton lecher, Mitya holds in his heart a longing for the highest ideals. He is an "unrestrained" Russian character who is capable of both great heights and great plunges. Mitya recites poems by Schiller and expounds with great inspiration upon beauty.



The Elder Amvrosy
of The Optina Monastery.
Photograph by N.N. Kampioni. 1870s

At the moment of his terrible and irrevocable crisis, arrested on an accusation of murder which he did not commit, he thinks of the sufferings of other people; while agonizing, he still asks why "the babe is crying."

Ivan is Dmitry's opposite, his counterpart. While his older brother is a man of strong passions and a "burning heart," Ivan is a scholar and a philosopher with a profound and strong intellect, who concentrates on the irreconcilable problems of human existence. For him, the most important thing is to "*solve an idea*" (sic). In the novel, he is the author of a philosophical "poem" entitled "The Grand Inquisitor," which he recites to his younger brother Alyosha. This poem, unconnected with the main plot of the novel, is, however, its most important part, the culmination of ideas presented and modeled in it.

The Elder Amvrosy (Aleksandr Mikhailovich Grenkov, 1812-1891), a confessor-priest at the Optina Monastery. He later became a canonized saint of the Russian Orthodox Church. Dostoevsky visited him twice, for a talk in private. These conversations and the very look of the Elder Amvrosy informed the image of the Elder Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Some fragments from their talks entered into the text of the novel word-for-word.

The conversation between the two brothers takes place in a small, "stinking" pub, not conducive to "elevated" conversations; at the point when the state of affairs in the family threatens to explode in crime and crisis. But such is the nature of "*Russian boys*," (in Ivan's words), for whom nothing in the world is more important than timeless questions, such as, "is there a God, or is there immortality?" "And those who don't believe in God," says Ivan, "well, they will start talking about Socialism and Anarchism, about retailoring all of humanity according to their new standard..." Alyosha and Ivan are true brothers (they have the same mother), but they express opposing views on the world. Ivan is a rebel and an atheist; he represents the

idea of rejecting the world. He bases his rejection and rebellion on numerous and striking examples of the suffering of children, in this cruel and imperfect world. His story about a child who, on a General's orders, was hunted down by dogs, in full view of his mother, evokes Alyosha's involuntary exclamation, "Shoot him!" No stronger argument for rebellion, that is, for the rejection of God's world, seems possible.

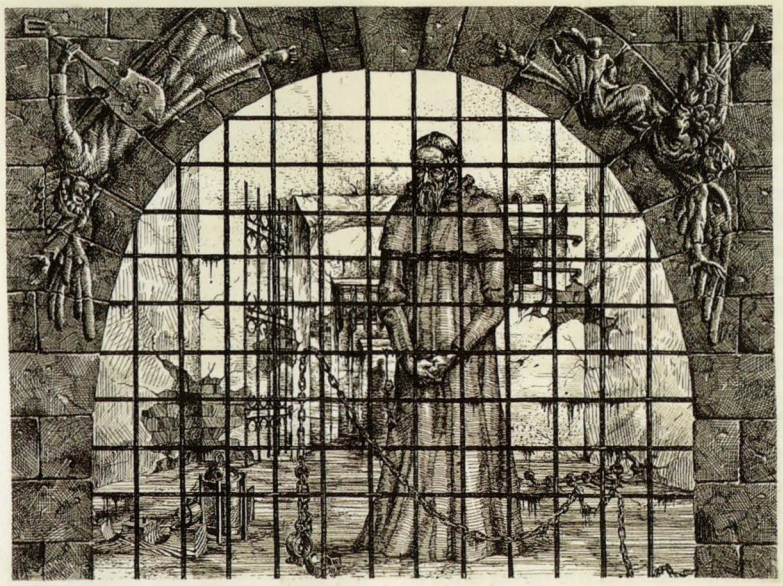
A.Korsakova. *Ilyushechka.*
Late 1960s

The theme of children's suffering runs through the entire novel. It includes both a bitter reproach to the world, which "is flooded by evil," and hope for the future which belongs to "the Boys" (Kolya Krasotkin and his gang). A reliable test of character for all the main characters in the novel is their attitude toward children. That is why the boys trust Alyosha Karamazov so completely.

Alyosha lives in a monastery as a novice. His personality and attitude toward the world and people are determined by a profound and sincere religiosity. He is the beloved disciple of the Elder Zosima. The gentle and God-loving Alyosha was to become the main character of the novel, which Dostoevsky envisioned as *The Life of Aleksei Fyodorovich Karamazov*.

The action of the novel takes place in the homes of its characters, in town pubs, on the streets, and in a small monastery situated next to the town. For the first time in his writings, Dostoevsky depicted the world of the Russian monastery, which he knew expertly and had "known since childhood," as he himself admitted in one of his letters to Apollon Maikov dated March 25, 1870. Undoubtedly, Dostoevsky's own impressions from his visit to the Optina Monastery in the summer of 1878 were reflected in the novel. Features of the famous Elder Amvrosy, with whom Dostoevsky conversed during his visit to the monastery, can be recognized in the image of the wise Elder Zosima. In the novel, the monastery is not completely walled off from the outside world. The characters in *The Brothers Karamazov*, both believers and atheists, in one way or another strive to have contact with Zosima. Even through Fyodor Karamazov's cynical and mocking chatter, one can discern an interest in the elder and his opinion.

Combined in the Elder Zosima are love for God, a free and genuine faith which does not search for outer effects, and love and compassion for

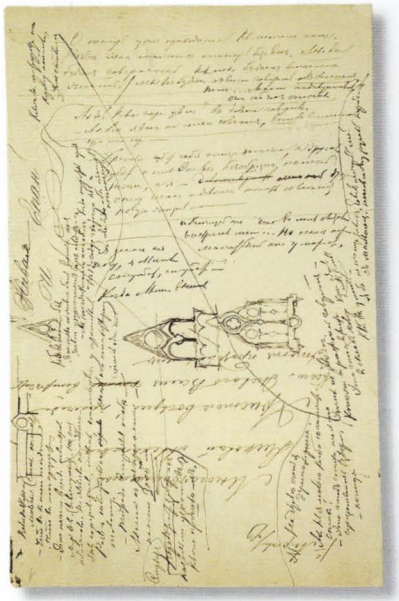


Y. I. Seliverstov. *The Grand Inquisitor.* Central part of the Triptych. 1969–1970

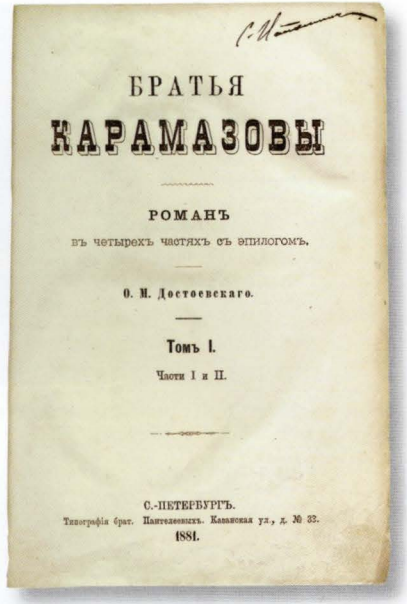
man. Alongside him, Dostoevsky depicts the fanatical Father Ferapont and a whole gallery of characters who represent the complex and heterogeneous world of monastery life.

Alyosha's life was actually to unfold in the succeeding parts of *The Brothers Karamazov*. On his deathbed, the Elder Zosima blesses him and admonishes Alyosha: to leave the monastery's walls in order to experience all the difficulty of life and human relationships, so that his faith would be tempered in the trials of worldly passions and of grief. Alyosha was to become a revolutionary and go through denial and atheism, in order to return to a true and deep faith, having passed "through the crucible of doubt." However, Dostoevsky's death precluded the completion of this project.

The novel was serialized in the journal *Russian Messenger* in 1879–1880, and, even before its publication was complete, it evoked numerous comments from readers and critics. "People are reading the novel everywhere, they write me letters, young people are reading it, they read it in the highest society... and I've never... had such success," Dostoevsky wrote in a letter. With the publication of the *Diary of a Writer* and the



Fragment from the manuscript of the novel The Brothers Karamazov



БРАТЬЯ

КАРАМАЗОВЫ

РОМАНЪ

ВЪ ЧЕТЫРЕХЪ ЧАСТЯХЪ СЪ ЭПИЛОГОМЪ.

Ѳ. М. Достоевскаго.

Томъ I.

Части I и II.

С.-ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ.

Типографія брат. Пантелеевыхъ. Казанская ул., д. № 33.

1881.

Title page of the novel's first edition (St. Petersburg, 1881)

appearance of his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky received public recognition as a spiritual teacher, a "sovereign of thought." People whom he had never met turned to him with confessional letters in hopes of resolving the tormenting problems of their spiritual quests. In the last years of his life, Dostoevsky's circle of acquaintances was exceptionally wide. He frequented the salons where the intellectual and artistic elite of Petersburg gathered. It was during the 1870s that Dostoevsky began to have close involvement with government circles. For example, he was personally acquainted and corresponded with such important governmental figures as K. Pobedonostsev and T. Filippov. He was even received by the tsar's family.

In his last years, the writer received many invitations to literary gatherings, where he would read fragments from his works, along with Pushkin's poems — many memoirists have remarked on his impressive reading of Pushkin's poem "The Prophet." He read in a quiet, subdued voice, but it seemed that the poem's commandment "to set people's hearts afire with your speech" had been given directly to Dostoevsky himself.

Moscow. Strastnaya Square, view on Tverskoy Boulevard.
Photograph. End of 19th cent.

THE PUSHKIN SPEECH

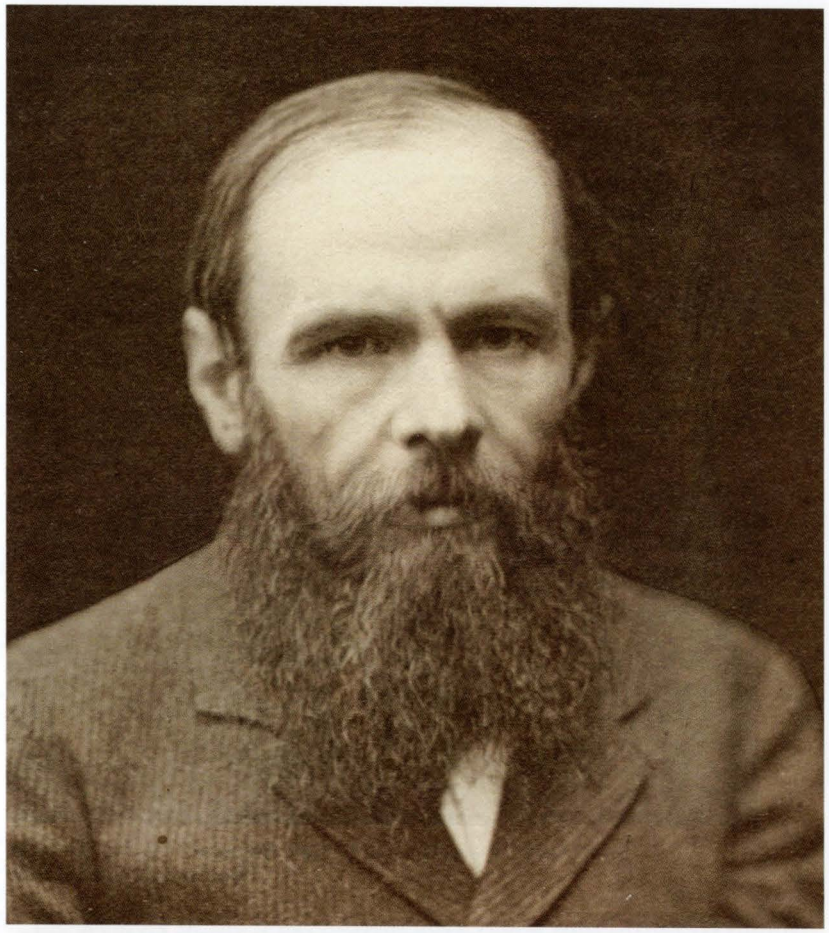
In June 1880, there was a celebration to mark the unveiling of Pushkin's monument in Moscow, on the Strastnaya Square (now Pushkin Square), to which Dostoevsky had been invited by the Society of Russian Literature Lovers. His speech at the celebration turned out to be a great public triumph for him.

In 1875, private donations from the Russian people financed the construction of A.M. Opekushin's monument to Pushkin. The public unveiling was to be celebrated with great fanfare, as a national holiday, when all layers of society, all parties, and all movements would unite in love for the memory of the great Russian poet. Along with Dostoevsky, other writers were asked to participate – Turgenev, Ostrovsky, Grigorovich, Pisemsky, Maikov, Polonsky, Pleshcheev, and Potekhin. The writers Saltykov-Shchedrin and Tolstoy refused the invitation; they both considered the event to be a trifling empty affair, routine liberal noisemaking. Tolstoy, who at that time was experiencing a spiritual crisis while working on his *Confession*, considered it immoral to hold celebrations and dinners at a time when villages were impoverished. Their refusals to attend, however, did not halt the festivities.

Dostoevsky worked on his *Pushkin Speech* with great enthusiasm, in the provincial town of Staraya Russa, where he lived at the time with his family (May 1880). On May 22, he traveled to Moscow to participate in the Pushkin commemoration. The celebration, however, was postponed because of the death of the Empress Maria Alexandrovna, the wife of Tsar

Strastnaya Square. Unveiling of the monument to A.S. Pushkin.
Photograph. June 6, 1880

"Pushkin is an extraordinary phenomenon, perhaps, unique for the Russian spirit, said Gogol. I will add, "a prophetic phenomenon." <...> Yet no single Russian writer, before or after him, ever associated himself with his people so intimately and in such a brotherly way, as Pushkin did. <...> One may say positively that, had Pushkin not existed, neither would the gifted writers who came after him exist, <...> were it not for him, our belief in our Russian individuality would have no forceful, irresistible expression, nether woul our now conscious faith in the people's powers emerge, nor our belief in our future individual destiny among the family of European nations. <...> Besides Pushkin, there had never been a poet capable of universal responsiveness like his. And it is not his sympathy alone, but his amazing profundity, the reincarnation of his spirit in the spirit of foreign nations. It is a reincarnation almost perfect and therefore also miraculous, because the phenomenon had never been repeated in any poet in all the world, only in Pushkin. For what is the power of the spirit of Russian nationality but its aspiration for the ultimate goal of universality and pan-humanity [*vsechelovechestvo*]?" (F.M.Dostoevsky. *Pushkin Speech*).



F.M. Dostoevsky. Photograph by M.M. Panov. June 9, 1880

Photograph of Dostoevsky, taken on June 9, 1880 – the day after giving his *Pushkin Speech* at the unveiling of the poet's monument in Moscow.

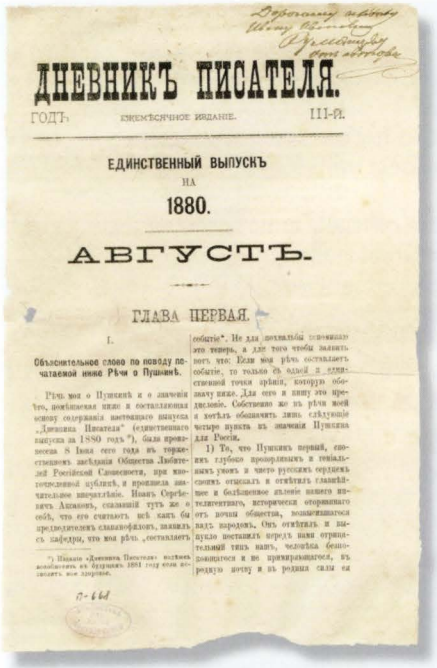
"In terms of photography techniques the portrait may be poor. Panov has made a great deal better portraits than that of Dostoevsky. But what is notable about this one is the expression in it. This photograph reveals so much significance and profound thought in Dostoevsky's face. Photographs hardly ever can convey the whole sum of a person's traits while depicting his face. Yet this photograph by Panov is an exception, rare and fortunate. Evidently, this time the photographer was helped by a moment of special inspiration in Dostoevsky's face — the moment of Pushkin's festivities in Moscow. The portrait was taken right after Dostoevsky had made his famous speech about the significance of Pushkin" (I.I.Kramskoi).

Alexander II. Dostoevsky remained in Moscow for the duration of the delay, using the time to negotiate with his publishers, visit relatives, and meet with literary figures. All this time he worried about his speech, to which he attached great significance. Pushkin was dear to Dostoevsky as his favorite poet, one who had greatly influenced his own creative work; in Pushkin, he also saw the embodiment of all the best traits inherent to the artistic spirit of the Russian people.

At last, the celebrations were officially announced. They began on June 5, with a formal assembly in the Great Hall of the Moscow City Council. On Pushkin's birthday, June 6, the monument was unveiled before a great gathering of people. That evening, at the dinner to honor the occasion in the Hall of the Nobility, Dostoevsky read the monologue of the monk Pimen from Pushkin's play *Boris Godunov*. On June 7–8, literary panels at the Society for Russian Literature Lovers commenced. Turgenev, beloved by the public as a great artist and liberal thinker, delivered an enormously successful speech. Dostoevsky was jealous of Turgenev's success, thinking that in his speech Turgenev had downplayed Pushkin's role as "*national poet*."

Dostoevsky, too, gave his speech on June 8. The impression produced by his reading was, quite simply, unique. On the same day he described the event in a letter to his wife Anna. Dostoevsky very clearly conveys the atmosphere of enthusiasm and emotional excitement that he himself and those gathered in the hall experienced: "I gave my speech at the 'Society' this morning. The hall was completely packed. No, Ania, no, you can never imagine the effect it had! [...] When I came out, the hall started roaring with applause and for a long time, a very long time, they wouldn't let me speak. [...]

Delight, enthusiasm (all because of *The Karamazovs*!). Finally I started speaking: they thoroughly interrupted me at every page, and sometimes at every phrase with a thunder of applause. I spoke loudly, heatedly. Everything I had written about Tatiana [the heroine of Pushkin's *Evgeny Onegin*] was received with enthusiasm. [...] When at the end I declared the universal unity of mankind, the hall was so hysterical that when I finished – I won't tell you about the roars, the cries of delight – people in the audience who didn't know each other were crying, sobbing, embracing, and swearing to each other that they would be better people, and wouldn't hate anymore, but love each other. The session's schedule fell apart: everyone came running up to me on the stage. [...] The calls continued for half an hour, people were waving their handkerchiefs; for instance, suddenly two old men I didn't know stopped me: 'We were enemies for 20 years, we didn't talk to each other, and now we've embraced and reconciled. It's you who have reconciled us, you are our saint, you are our prophet!' 'A prophet, a prophet!' they were shouting in the crowd. Turgenev, whom I had mentioned kindly in my speech, hurried in tears to embrace me.



ДНЕВНИКЪ ПИСАТЕЛЯ.

ГОДЪ ЕЖЕМѢСЯЧНОЕ ИЗДАНІЕ. III-Й.

ЕДИНСТВЕННЫЙ ВЫПУСКЪ
НА
1880.

АВГУСТЪ.

ГЛАВА ПЕРВАЯ.

I.

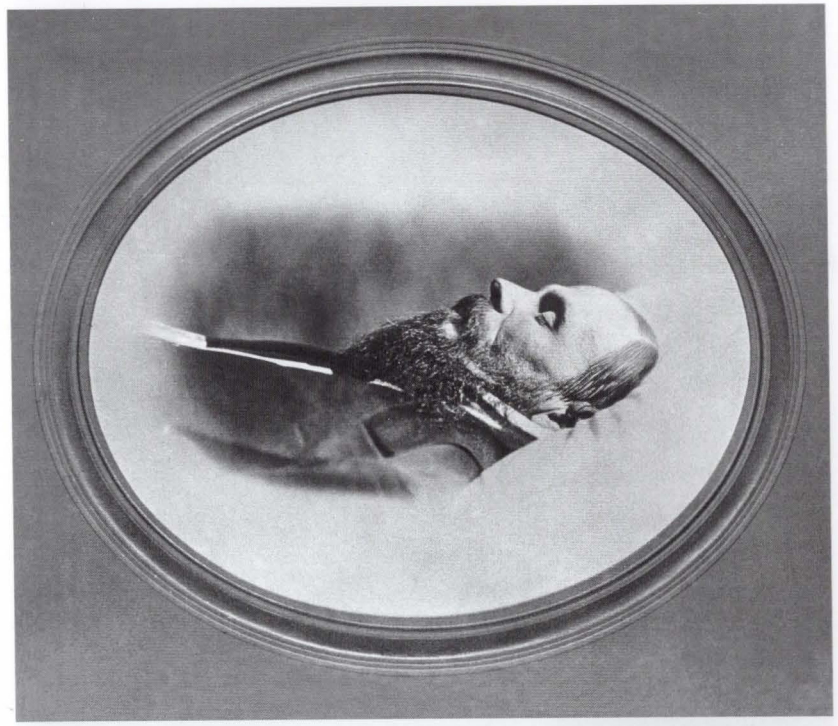
Объяснительное слово по поводу печатаемой ниже Рѣчи о Пушкинѣ.

F.M. Dostoevsky. *Diary of a Writer* (August1880) with June *Pushkin Speech*

[...] Some university students came running up. One of them, in tears, fell to the floor in front of me in hysterics and fainted. A complete, the most complete victory! [...] After almost an hour's interruption the panel reconvened. At first it seemed no one wanted to speak. Aksakov stepped up and announced that he wouldn't give his speech because everything had been said and everything resolved by the great words of our genius – Dostoevsky. However, we all made him speak. [...] I grew weak and started to leave, but they held me back by force. In that hour's time they had managed to buy the most elaborate laurel wreath, 1½ meters in diameter, and at the end of the session a large number of women (more than a hundred) burst onto the stage and crowned me with the wreath in front of the whole hall: 'For Russian women, about whom you've spoken so much good!' You have to agree, Ania, that it was alright to stay for that: these are guarantees for the future, guarantees for everything, even in the event that I die."

This famous speech was the last expression of the writer's most dearly held ideas about the universal and all-reconciling significance of Pushkin. It rang out as Dostoevsky's spiritual testament. In his reflections on Pushkin, he was able to incorporate his own cherished ideas about the fate of the generation of "Russian wanderers," the intelligentsia who had been educated in Europe, about their attitude toward Russia and national harmony, about the Russian woman, who embodies all that is best in this harmony, and about Russia's future. Dostoevsky emphasized Pushkin's talent for deep understanding and prophetic foreknowledge, and he spoke of the great purpose of this national genius. The audience heard in the writer's words a very profound sincerity and truth which evoked spiritual fervor and caused many to say that Dostoevsky himself was a "prophet."

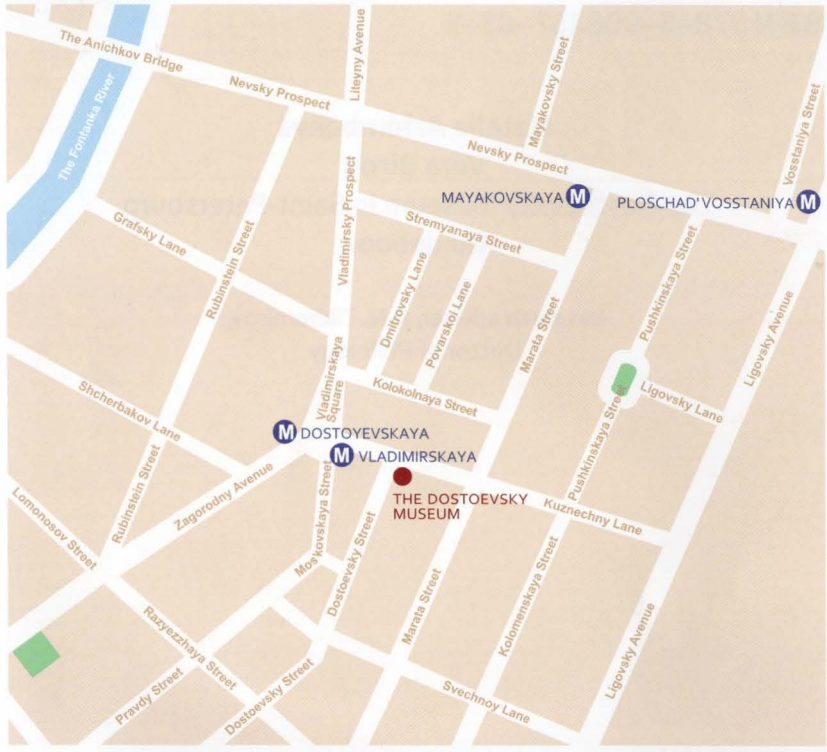
In six months after his brilliant speech in Moscow, on January 28, 1881, Dostoevsky died at the height of his fame. Many plans left unrealized,



Dostoevsky in his coffin. Photograph by K.A. Shapiro. Jan. 30, 1881

first of all the succeeding parts of *The Brothers Karamazov*; about them we can only conjecture. In conclusion of his *Pushkin Speech*, Dostoevsky said: "Pushkin died at the height of his strength, and he undeniably took a great mystery with him to his grave. And now we, without him, are seeking to solve his mystery." These words can be applied equally to Dostoevsky himself. His thoughts about the nature of human beings, about destinies of Russia, left by him in the form of great artistic pictures, images, and philosophical reflections, are very important for the people of divers cultures and religious convictions. Significantly, for the epigraph to *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky chose from the New Testament the Gospel verse about "a corn of wheat." His tombstone in the Alexander Nevsky Monastery is inscribed with the same verse: "Verily, verily I say unto you: Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

Monument to F.M. Dostoevsky on Bolshaya Moskovskaya Street.
Sculptor L. Kholina



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THE DOSTOEVSKY MUSEUM
5/2 Kuznechny Lane, St. Petersburg, 191002
Tel.: +7 (812) 571-4031
M "Vladimirskaya", M "Dostoevskaya"
www.md.spb.ru

SBN 978–5–906357–63–2

Natalia Ashimbaeva
Vera Biron

The Dostoevsky Museum in Saint-Petersburg:
Guidebook

Research adviser, B.N. Tikhomirov,
Doctor of Philology

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